

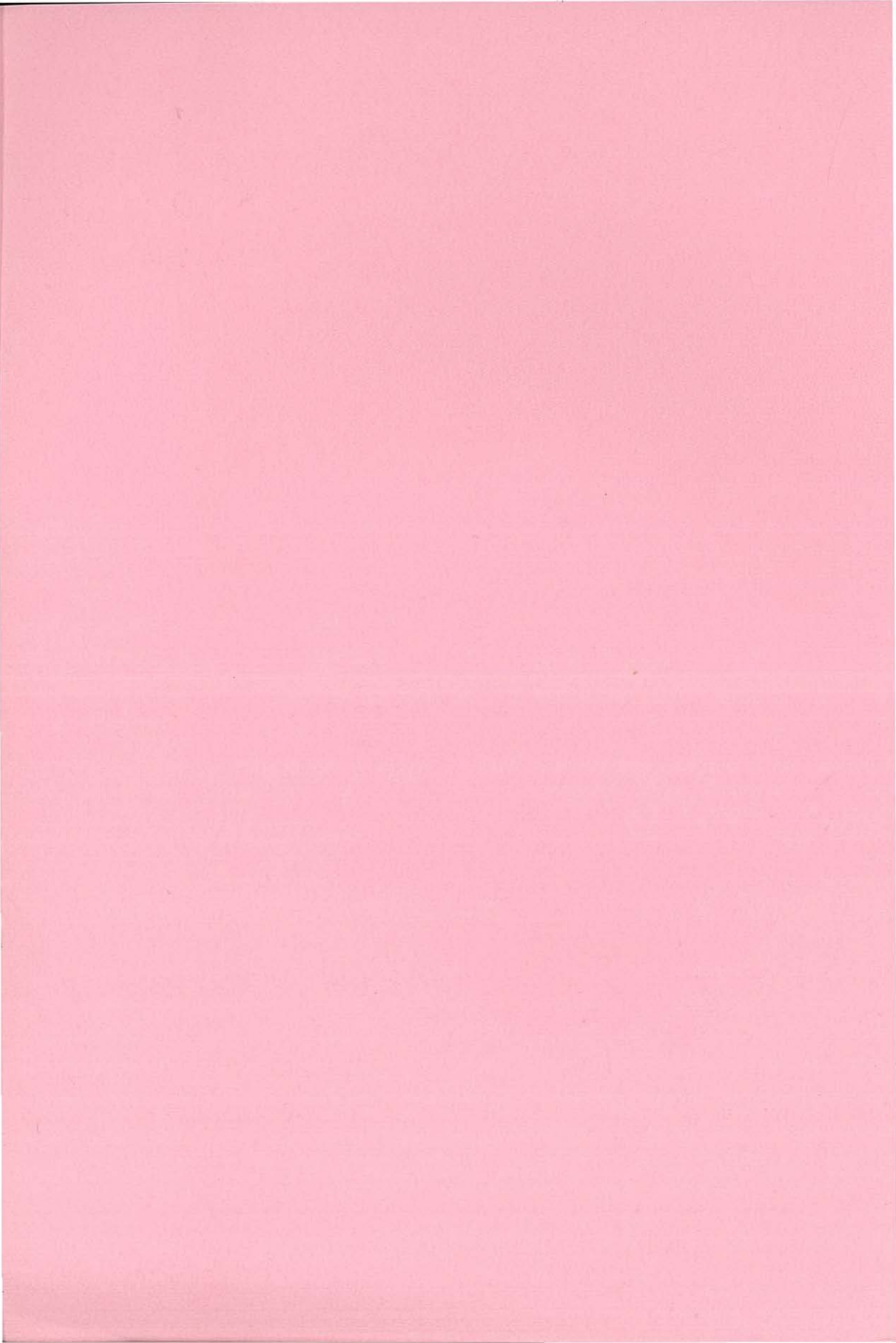
THE VALLISOLETAN

Number 4

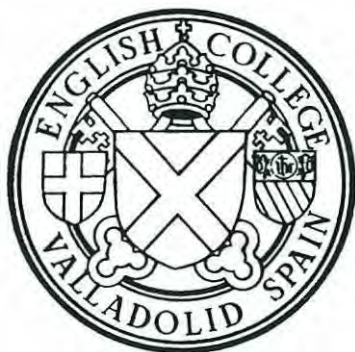
1995

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The Vallisoletan



*The Magazine of the
Royal English College, Valladolid*

THE VALLISOLETAN

Editors: Rev. Julian Green
Christopher Parsons
Timothy Pike

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The House, 1994-5

Rector's Foreword

Once again, one of the fruits of a busy year in Saint Alban's is another edition of *The Vallisoletan*. It reflects once again the richness of life here and is a witness to the many ways we relate to the wider community and the Church at large, both in the present and through the stories of those of other generations.

I am extremely grateful for the work of the editors and for the generous way in which the contributors to this edition have responded to requests for articles. Although the production of the magazine is now becoming a part of the annual routine it does not make it any less of a demand on the editors.

The past year in particular has seen an abundance of "happenings". The pity is that the following pages can simply touch the surface. To adapt the words of the psalmist, I invite you to simply "Taste and see that the Lord is good to us". Do have an enjoyable read.

With every prayer and good wish.

Rt. Rev. Mgr. Paul F. Smith,
Rector

A Note from the Editor

There was a certain pessimistic aspect to last year's editorial, a certain lack of confidence in what the future would bring. However the tide seems to have turned rather. While at the time that the third edition of *The Vallisoletan* was going to press it seemed that there would be no new students for the Academic Year 1994-5, as it turned out three 'new boys' did arrive to swell the ranks of our diminutive community. In fact Valladolid was the only British seminary to increase its numbers in this Academic Year. Again this year we are expecting at least a further two 'starters', replacing our two 'leavers'. So the College's position seems rather healthier this June than last.

On a more personal note, this is the last edition of *The Vallisoletan* that I shall produce as editor, the last of the 'founding editors'. But *The Vallisoletan* goes on, as I hand over to Chris Parsons and Timothy Pike who have helped in the production of this edition and will take over fully in the new Academic Year. I am sure that their commitment to providing a slice of College life for our readers will bring with it a certain freshness of approach.

Rev. Julian Green

BACK TO BASICS

Rt. Rev. Vincent Nichols

While politicians may be confused about basic principles and values, we have to be clear, as ministers of the Gospel of Christ, on a few basic issues. Bishop Nichols, currently Area Bishop in North London, here proposes three basic principles on which to found our pastoral service: prayer, a common heart and mind, and self-giving generosity.

Some time ago now, many of the catechists from the parishes in Westminster Diocese met to reflect together on their experiences of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. In recent years, these men and women, together with their colleagues, have been responsible for accompanying over 600 people each year to baptism or into full communion with the Catholic Church. Their dedication is unquestionable and the experience very considerable.

In the course of these reflections, one of the important themes to emerge was that of the qualities of the Church which correspond to the quest of those seeking faith or its fullness. What kind of Church must we be, in parishes and diocese, if we are to be the servant of faith in contemporary Britain?

Of course this question takes on a much more personal dimension when we take a look at the themes emerging on that day. The catechists were only too well aware that enquirers who come seeking faith meet in the catechists themselves the Church which they hope will give them faith. In other words there was a keen awareness that questions about the kind of Church we should be are also questions about the kind of person each of us ought to be.

Another step emerged on that day, too. Clearly, as the Church teaches us, the central focus of all catechises, and the RCIA is no exception, is the person of Christ. The search for faith is always a search for Christ, for a relationship with him who alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life. In meeting Christ, the vague impressions or instincts for faith are brought into sharp focus. This was certainly the experience of the first disciples. They faced, from Jesus himself, the decisive question: "But you, who do you say that I am?" (Mt.16.15). The men and women who lead this pilgrimage of faith for so many people, told us that they had come to the clear realisation that the Jesus whom the enquirers get to know is the same Jesus who they themselves mediate.

The challenge from this meeting, on which we do well to reflect, is that in our work we mediate in our very selves both the person of Christ and the Church that is his Body. That is a sobering thought.

But the reflections of the catechists were both challenging and constructive. They were able to pinpoint three characteristics which seemed, in their experience, to be central in this crucial mediation. Those who are to be ambassadors for Christ and for the Church need to manifest these three qualities: prayerfulness, a common heart and mind, and a self-sacrificing generosity.

The prayerfulness which people seem to seek is more than the regular practice of saying prayers. Certainly fidelity in the practice of prayer is essential. It is both the condition and expression of prayerfulness. But there is a further, more inner quality about prayerfulness. Rather the prayerfulness which we seek is a disposition of the heart. It is a longing of the heart, a desire rather than an achievement. It is a desire to come close to Christ, to know him, to be with him, to be one with him. This prayerfulness gives rise to all sorts of attitudes to everyday life, to its problems and joys. A desire to know Christ means being sensitive to his presence and his will in every circumstance. It means having a heart free for Christ, ready to discern his face in others, even in the most unexpected places.

Prayerfulness is an expression of the desire to be possessed by God as the only supreme good. It involves the gradual removal of all other absolutes, or false gods, which surround and beset us day by day. Prayerfulness is the result of seeking clear priorities for daily living, those which arise from the revealed Word of God and from God's intention for the people.

In case these descriptions of prayerfulness seem awesome, or even unattainable, the catechists were realistic enough to note that prayerfulness, in its simplest form, is no more than the desire to want these things. It is the setting of one's heart in that direction, even if at times there is little enthusiasm or warmth to be found. "Lord, I do have faith. Help the little faith I have!" (Mk.9.25) is the prayer to which we often find ourselves having recourse.

The second quality outlined on our day with catechists was that of "having a common heart and mind". In this we are being told that enquirers come seeking in the Church an experience of people living, working, believing together in a communion of mind and heart.

Listening to this I was reminded of a passage in a novel by Sarah Maitland. The novel is called "Home Truths" and tells a story of complex family relationships. At one point a mother and daughter, who has joined the Carmelite order, are exploring the meaning of obedience in Christian living. The daughter, Ceci, explains that she has no difficulty in doing what she's told. "But", she says, "I find it almost impossible to think, to plan, to imagine with a common mind." That is as good a description of obedience as I have heard.

It is hardly surprising that in today's society, with its heavy emphasis on the importance of individual fulfilment and satisfaction, enquirers seek a different quality of life. Such a "common heart and mind" which is perhaps meant by the phrase *sentire cum ecclesia*, is not easy to achieve.

For one thing it means being open to the work of God in other people, and ready to accept the gifts of God given to them. This becomes particularly relevant

as we welcome into full communion in the Church many whose experience of God's spirit has been clear and powerful, though different from much with which we are familiar. The temptation is always to think that God will confirm in others the shape and experience of faith that we have known. We tend to think that all Catholics should be like us. It's only a matter of time before they become familiar with our ways of doing things. Yet the search for a truly common, or Catholic, heart and mind means being open to the truths of Catholic faith and life when they come to us in different guises and experiences, with different emphases and concerns.

Having a common heart and mind, a willingness to think, imagine, plan with the whole Church, demands a great deal of prayerful discernment. This is often asked of catechists, and indeed of those, like the priests, with whom they work.

The third of the qualities which we must seek is that of self-sacrificing generosity. Sometimes it is said of Catholics that they are ready volunteers. If that is indeed so, perhaps it arises from the central place we give in our spiritual lives to the celebration of the Mass, the supreme self-sacrifice of generous love.

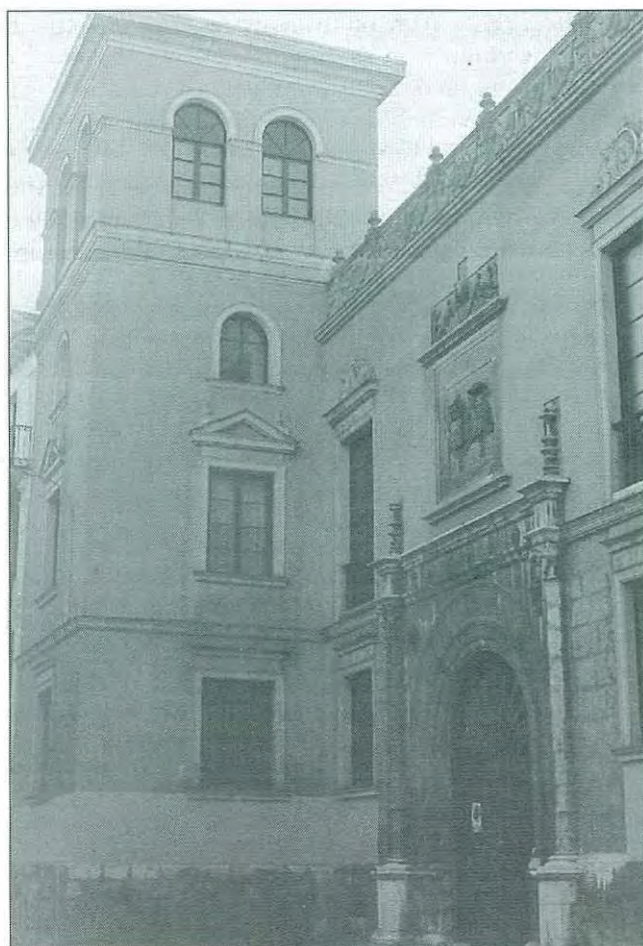
The life of the priest clearly should be marked by this quality. He who configures himself to Christ in this special sacramental bond of orders must always seek to express this kind of love in daily ministry. Yet, somehow, today the priesthood is often perceived by others as an exercise of power. Rightly or wrongly, it is seen as giving access to status and control. It is seen as a position of power, control and decision, rather than one of service and self-sacrificing love.

This is a real challenge to all who exercise, or seek to exercise, the priesthood in the Church today. The opportunities and responsibilities which come with the priesthood need to be clothed in this spirit of self-sacrifice. They need to be transparently the exercise of service of the community and not of the self. Priesthood is an invitation to the renunciation of self and the embrace of the way of the poor Christ who handed himself over to others, with all the consequent misunderstanding and suffering. That is our challenge.

Prayerfulness, the forming of a common heart and mind, and generous self-giving: these are the qualities of life that the Christian and the Christian community are being invited to embody. And if this is true for the catechist or the sponsor, involved in the RCIA, it is most surely true for every priest and for all who aspire to that ministry.



*The College goes public:
a new sign outside the main door.*



*The Archiepiscopal Pallace, Valladolid.
1995 marks the fourth centenary of the Diocese.*

COLLEGE DIARY

April 1994-June 1995

Last year's diary left us in the middle of Easter week, with students away on holiday at various destinations. But one student had returned home for his Diaconate Ordination. While the Bishops of Hallam and Nottingham had been happy to allow their students to be ordained in College at the usual time, the Archbishop of Cardiff wished to ordain John Morgan to the Diaconate in a parish of his Diocese. This was so as to allow those who would not normally benefit from being present at such an Ordination to witness the great event.

This term's pastoral talks were on the subject of Child Sexual Abuse. Despite a certain trepidation, certainly on the part of many students, everyone was gripped by the highly charged and emotional presentations made by Tracy Hansen, Fr. Austin McCormack OFM and Fr. Jim Kennedy. The talks on three consecutive evenings provoked discussion until quite late into the night in the student's lounge, and by the end of the week everyone seemed quite drained. However it was rewarding in that practical issues and situations were covered, as well as new insights being given on forgiveness and pastoral-sacramental practice.

The month of May brought a large number of visitors including students' families, the parents of Fr. Denis Carlin, Vice Rector of the Scots College and Old Boys including the ever faithful Fr. John Kearsey. The annual visitation by the

Bishops' Conference Committee comprising Bishops Leo McCartie, James O'Brien and Kevin O'Brien was as eventful as ever. Centre stage was Michael Jones of the Diocese of Salford who was admitted as a Candidate for Holy Orders by Bishop James.



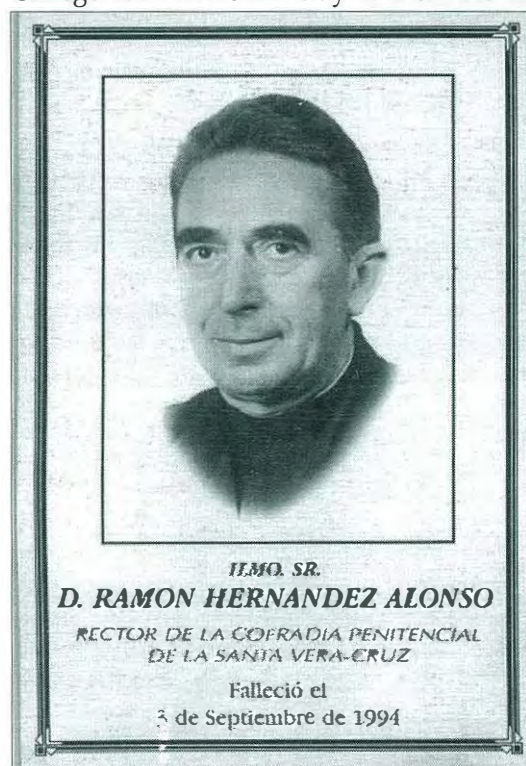
Michael Jones with other members of his year at the Augs celebrate after Candidacy.

June is always the month of saying farewell, and this year was no exception with the departure of Fr. Peter Collins, the Vice Rector, and two deacons, Paul Farrer and Andrew Goodman. The traditional *despedidas* lasted the whole month with a meal at the *Centro Segoviano* for Fr. Peter Collins, and a student

meal at a local Chinese Restaurant for Paul and Andy. But it was 'hello' to Mgr. Ronald Hishon, former Rector, who came to College to spend a few days resting before taking up his appointment as Parish Priest in Newport, Isle of Wight. And a further welcome was extended to Mgr. Michael Keegan and Fr. Brian Croughan who came to join Fr. Parkinson for a small symposium on Revelation and Catechesis.

It should be recorded here that our leavers this year broke a three year run of no one gaining the STB by satisfying the examiners of their competence in theology. Paul was awarded a *notable* and Andrew an *aprobado*.

The summer saw many familiar faces passing through Country House, and a few new ones. But it was not all play, as a group of visitors from Heythrop College took turns in relay to man the new library computers and help with starting the library cataloguing.



One piece of sad news which shocked students as they returned after the Summer vacation was the sudden death of Don Ramón Hernández Alonso. He rose from being *chico*, or servant boy, in the College to become not only the Rector of the Confraternity of the True Cross, helping to involve the College in that Confraternity, but also Canon of the Cathedral and a member of the Diocesan Curia, being involved in the Marriage Tribunal. Only just over two months before his death he had travelled to England to attend the annual Old Boys' meeting at Droitwich, and was elected an honorary member of the Valladolid Association. He will be sorely missed both in College and in the Diocese of Valladolid.

As students began to arrive from England, so did the news of the death of Fr. Peter Lees, trustee and Old Boy of the College. Unfortunately it was decided that nobody should return to England for the funeral, though a Requiem Mass was celebrated in College. Many Old Boys did make it to the Funeral Mass in Stafford, and two of them have written their own tributes which may be found later in the Magazine.

The annual upheaval of moving back to the College was soon put to one side with the bullfights for the feast of Saint Matthew. The *corridos* were considered some of the best for years with many ears being awarded, and a shoulder-high circuit of the ring for the bull breeder, let alone the matadors.

The end of the Spanish course for the three new members of the community was soon followed by a Mass of welcome and formal entrance to the College. This year's intake comprised Mark Jaworowski of the Diocese of Salford, and Christopher Parsons and Timothy Pike, both of the Diocese of Plymouth. The College also received back into the fold Fr. Gerry Gillespie, who came to stay until Easter, so as to recuperate from the after-effects of diseases picked up during his two-year stay in Kenya. In this same week the Archbishop of Valladolid presided at the inaugural Mass for the start of the academic year at the Augustinians, and lectures started on the next day.



New Boys ... Chris, Mark and Tim.

September saw a number of Old Boys come to visit College including Fr. Jerome Ainsworth, celebrating his Silver Jubilee of ordination and Fr. Pat Earley of Salford Diocese and Mgr. David Bottrill, Vicar General of Menevia Diocese both celebrating forty years of priesthood.

October had a certain military feel to it. In the first place we were visited by three military chaplains on a recruitment drive: Fr. Alan Wilson of the RAF, Fr. Paul Donovan of the Royal Navy and Fr. Phelim Rowland, Army Chaplain. Having successfully completed their operation in Valladolid, they manoeuvred for a Scottish offensive in Salamanca. A week later Rev. Edward Renfrey, Anglican Royal Navy Chaplain in Poole, and his wife Carol, both friends of Fr. Peter Webb, former Spiritual Director, came purely to enjoy a relaxing holiday. They coincided with the now annual visit of the Plymouth golfing brethren led by Fr. John Bolland, who were returning from a couple of weeks of solid golf in Portugal.

The untimely death of Fr. Seamus Gilroy, former Vocations Director of the Archdiocese of Birmingham came as a great shock. The Rector sent both of the

Birmingham students back to England at great expense to be present for the funeral ceremonies. The gesture was greatly appreciated, no least by the Archbishop of Birmingham, who noted in his funeral homily the presence of seminarians from Spain.

Former Vice Rectors Canon Peter Dooling and Fr. Bernard Higham arrived in time for the Feast of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. As well as the traditional Mass and banquet, Fr. Bernard treated as many students as were interested to the spectacle of watching Real Valladolid lose at home. This tradition of Sunday football spectating by students has died off in recent years, whereas the tradition of Valladolid losing at home has not.

Soon, towards the end of the month, the students and staff travelled back to Country House for the annual retreat, this year led by Fr Pat Kilgariff, former Spiritual Director at the English College, Rome, now Parish Priest in Coventry. Whilst the autumn sun shone, Fr. Pat shared with us his wide and varied experience drawing on years with the CMS, as well as his time in Rome and in various parishes of the Birmingham Diocese, for an anecdotal reflection on priesthood and formation.

The highlight of November was the annual Vocations Directors' Conference. They amply filled the College, overflowing into the Diocesan Spirituality Centre (the former Scots College). The liturgy was the central meeting point for the College community and the guests, but, following the Latin tradition of *post missam mensa*, the week ended with a meal out together, which turned into an *ad hoc* cabaret. Unfortunately our guests had a long coach trip to Valencia on their departure, thereby avoiding strikes at Madrid airport.

Fr. Gerry Marsden simply flew to England for the Seminary Staffs' Meeting and the Seminary Spiritual Directors' Meeting, both held at Upholland. Stepping into the spiritual void caused by Fr. Marsden's absence, Fr. Francis Parkinson led a weekend recollection preparing us for the celebration of the Feast of Christ the King.

Readers of *The Vallisoletan* will already be well acquainted with the *punte*, or bridge: long weekends created when feast days fall on a Tuesday or a Thursday. This year, Spain's calendar of public holidays brought about the rare event of an *acueducto*. The Constitution Day (December 6) fell on the Tuesday and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8) was celebrated on the Thursday. So, logically following the *punte* principle, both Monday and Friday were free days too. This would leave two long weekends separated only by a Wednesday. On the principle that it's never worth turning in to work for one day only, that too would be a free day, thus resulting in a very long public holiday. Many people had a week off, despite questions being raised in the Spanish Parliament. It was, however, the Augustinian Fathers who scuppered our hopes of a long break. The poor students were driven to keep working, having a *punte* holiday given only for the Immaculate Conception. This meant having to attend lectures on the Monday and Wednesday.

Advent brought with it the usual round of preparations for the celebration of the Feast of the College Patroness, Our Lady Vulnerata, with the Solemn Novena. The Mass for the Feast itself was attended by Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador, David Blighty, who was present for the consequent banquet, along with the usual company of high ranking clerics from the Diocese of Valladolid.

Meanwhile Country House gave itself a spontaneous wash down. Nine thousand litres of water cascaded down three floors from the tank in the roof so as to create an all-seasons swimming pool in the bodega. The drying out process was hindered by the cold and damp climate of December.



This is just 'Adios' and not 'Goodbye': Seeing the students off at Christmas.

Entering the final stages of Advent, Bishop Patrick Kelly of Salford gave the monthly weekend recollection. He impressed us all by disclosing his daily morning routine of reading a chapter of the Holy Scripture in its original Greek. He encouraged us to do likewise, but generously waived the necessity for it to be in Greek, especially for those who find it somewhat taxing at that early hour. On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Bishop Kelly instituted his own student prodigy Michael Jones in the ministry of Acolyte.

Before we returned home for the Christmas break, the refectory burst into life with a loud and colourful display of *jota* dancing, complete with castanets, cornets and people standing three high on each other's shoulders. Students and staff were joined by many local families and friends, and everybody entered into the spirit of the event, at least as much as their bodies would allow them.

At the lowest point of the year, returning from home to College after the Christmas holidays with the prospect of first semester exams, spirits were raised

by a community celebration of the 21st birthday of Jan Nowotnik. A meal was cooked in the student lounge, followed by a presentation.

Fr. Francis delayed his return to the College after Christmas in order to attend the Dogma Profs' conference in Canterbury. He presented a paper of deep theological insights on the Theology of Story, his particular specialization. Meanwhile, the College was visited by a delegation from the *Fundación Hispano-Británica*, a society of British and Spanish mutual interest, who were given a guided tour of the College followed by a modest meal.

The pervading peace and quiet that had been characteristic of the College in the earnest preparation for exams, was laid aside once more as the building filled with the discussions of a new group of people. This time it was a conference/holiday organised by the Catholic Missionary Society for its full-time workers and friends. The company included Old Boys Frs. Paul Billington, Douglas Morris, Danny Hernández and John Deeney. Reactions to the variety of liturgical experiences differed, but no one failed to be impressed by the deep scriptural reflections given by Fr. Hugh White of St. Andrews and Edinburgh Diocese.

Later in February, two bishops overlapped. Bishop Vincent Nichols, Area Bishop in North London, came hot-foot from a visit to Albania to lead a weekend of recollection, which is the basis for this edition's lead article. He revealed that whilst in Albania he was struck by the futility of oppression: "as grass grows through concrete" so a people cannot be oppressed. Before Bishop Nichols left us, Bishop David Konstant of Leeds, arrived to give a series of pastoral talks about the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in his capacity as a member of the international commission for its compilation and translation, and Catholic education, especially changes following recent government legislation.

At this time Fr. Gerry Gillespie had to return home unexpectedly, as his father was taken seriously ill. The Rector headed off for the Rectors' Conference at St. John's College, Womersley for a week. Regulars Fr. Tony Joyce and Fr. Sandy Brown stayed a few days en route to other parts of Spain.

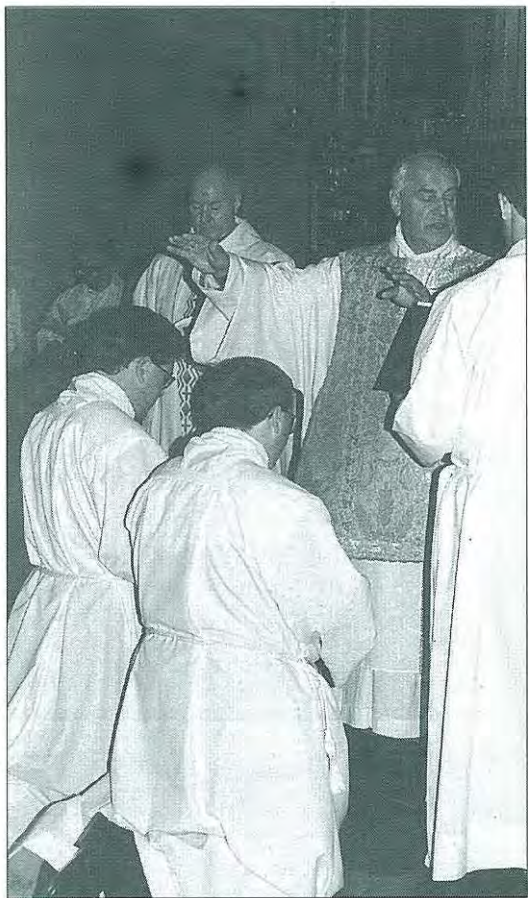
We were joined by two Eastern Europeans during Lent. Slovak-Hungarian "language accumulator", Miroslav, joined us for what was to be two months, to learn Spanish, and happened to coincide with a Czech seminarian, Marek, who arrived two weeks earlier to learn English. They certainly made their presence felt, and will be remembered for a long time.

Students met together in advance of Lent to plan a programme of devotional aids for keeping the season of repentance and conversion. Apart from daily readings of the Fathers of the Church, weekly Stations of the Cross and Exposition, each Friday was marked by a sermon by a visiting preacher invited from among the local clergy and even the Augs.

On the Second Sunday of Lent, Fr. Frank presided at a Solemn Mass in the beautiful Church of San Pablo to inaugurate a series of exhibitions on the celebration of Holy Week throughout Spain, organised by the Junta Pro Semana

Santa. A choir of students, directed by choirmaster Julian Green, gave the Mass a certain gravitas. Despite Mass being almost completely sung, with a homily, and

about a thousand communicants, it was all over in fifty minutes, much to the relief of the Dominican sacristan.



*A solemn moment during the Diaconate Ordination:
the Prayer of Consecration.*

The good weather came early with March initiating a spring of unbroken clear skies week after week. Mark Houston and Julian Green each departed in turn for a week of personal retreat in preparation for their forthcoming Diaconate Ordination. Mark headed off first to the Carmelite Priory at El Henar on the border between Valladolid and Segovia provinces. Julian joined the Benedictine monks of the now world famous Silos Abbey, coinciding with the opening of an important exhibition on the origins of the Castilian language at Silos, inaugurated by regional President, Juan José Lucas.

In no time at all families and guests from England were arriving for the Ordination. For the third time this year, the College was a hive of activity with a fresh supporting cast. As well as families and close friends of the two

ordinands, a group of parishioners from Julian's parish, Our Lady & St. Werburgh, Newcastle-under-Lyme, attended, led by Parish Priest, Fr. Malcolm Glaze. Unfortunately the experience was marred by two muggings and one break-in.

On the day before the Ordination, the annual *Vera Cruz* Mass was with us again and marked the start of what, for most of us, is the high point of the year - Holy Week. His Grace Archbishop Maurice Couve de Murville, accompanied by Fr. Patrick Daly arrived that same afternoon in good time to prepare for the Ordination. Once again this year we were treated to a display of liturgical expertise which meant that the Ordination went without a hitch, and only a minority of people's noses out of joint. However thanks must go particularly to Fr. Robert Corrigan who left his Bishop without a minder for a week so as to be able to come to College and tickle Dolores' ivories. *Pinchos* and wine followed the Ordination in the patio for all present until we formed into three separate parties

and headed off in search of lunch amongst the city's fine restaurants.

Many guests remained for the Holy Week processions and the Easter Triduum. Notable were the efforts of flower arrangers and artists, especially Mr. Steve Dunn who collaborated with Chris Parsons to decorate the Paschal candle, ennobling it with a sumptuously painted Celtic cross, adding a certain dignity to our celebration of the Paschal Vigil. With Easter morning well and truly greeted, and rooms having been blessed, we all scattered for the traditional week-long holiday, dispersing to Rome, Andalucía, Valencia, Extremadura or England. Some remained in College for the week, however, to recover from the excesses of piety and devotion.

Once all the students were back, and lectures recommenced, Fr. Gerry Gillespie rejoined us for one month after improvement in his father's health. Sadly, after several cancelled plans owing to serious illness, Old Boy Fr. Tony Bennett was again too ill to visit his College, despite making it as far as Lourdes.

Meanwhile the Rector headed south to Sanlúcar de Barrameda with the twofold purpose of business, in regard to the land owned by the English bishops there of which he is the administrator, and having a well-deserved rest. But there's no rest for the wicked. Fr. Francis Parkirlson represented the College at a series of lectures given by Fr. Aureli Boix, an Oratorian from Barcelona, on the *Via Media* of



Musical threesome ... Chris Parsons and Fr. Robert Corrigan with Dolores the Organ.



Robert with the Nuncio, Archbishop Barbarito, after being instituted as Rector.

Cardinal Newman. Fr. Parkinson explains elsewhere in this publication the full importance of the Chair in Theology, the course of lectures and the resulting critical edition of the work.

The pressures of work meant that Fr. Parkinson missed the great Feast of the Beatified Martyrs of England and Wales. The rest of the College celebrated rather lukewarmly this feast with a mid-morning Mass and consequent meal. Lack of numbers seems to have tempered the festivities.

The Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, Archbishop Luigi Barbarito, made a three day visit to the College, his first since 1989. After instituting Robert King of the Diocese of Clifton in the ministry of Reader, the Nuncio talked to the students about his vision of the Church in England and Wales, of its "coming of age", of the priesthood, and also the recent developments with the Anglican clergy being received into full communion.

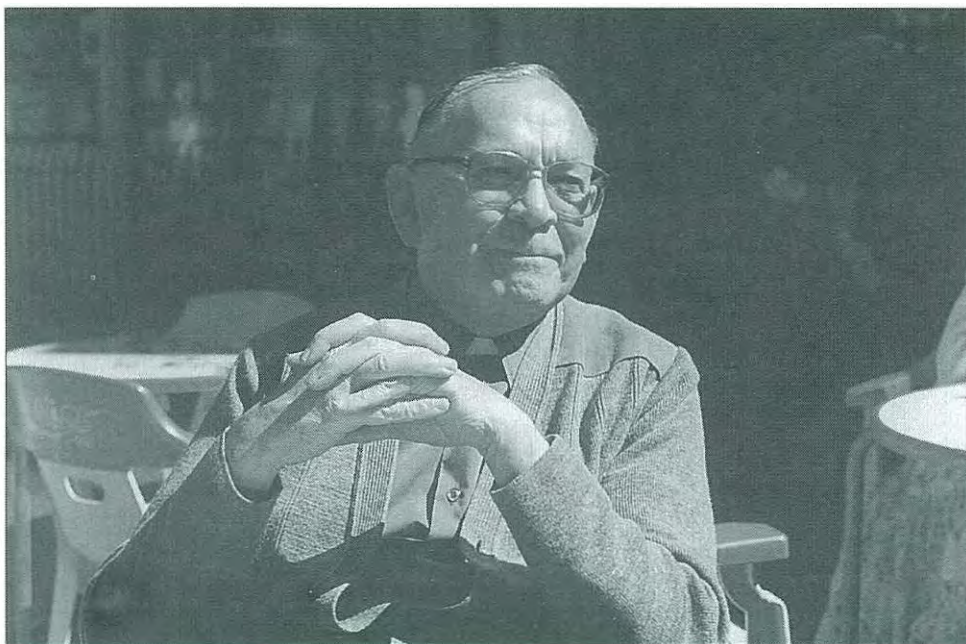
Kathy Walsh, who came out to give some fascinating pastoral presentations concerning New Religious Movements and their implications, livened up the meal to celebrate the Nuncio's visit by engaging him in a conversation about power in the Church. Her own series of talks covered the work of INFORM, an information exchange organisation interested in New Religious Movements, and based at the London School of Economics, as well as aspects of the New Age Movement. Mrs. Walsh has kindly allowed us to reproduce her article on Catholic responses to the New Age Movement.

The final few weeks of lectures slipped by with essays being completed and panic buttons being pressed. But there was still time for rest and relaxation what with the San Pedro Regalado bullfights, and various musical events.



Rose between two thorns ... Jan the Candidate with Bishops McCartie and O'Brien.

Bishops James O'Brien and Leo McCartie arrived once more for the annual visit of the Bishops' Committee. While they were with us, Bishop McCartie admitted Jan Nowotnik of the Archdiocese of Birmingham as a candidate for Holy Orders. Bishop Leo was delighted that he was the Bishop who had confirmed Jan some eleven years previously. As he remarked, "My confirmations work". Once the road was clear of Bishops, Fr. Andy Graydon of Hallam Diocese gave a series of talks on Christian love and friendship in a most idiosyncratic style.



On his way out ... Fr. Marsden enjoys his last 'sol y sombra'.

Mgr. Canon Nicholas Rothon visited us once more on the pretext of looking over the accounts, this time accompanied by Mgr. Canon John Ryan, College trustee and former Rector. As lectures finished the student body took John Morgan and Darren Reid, this year's leavers, out for a farewell meal before the preparation for the degree exams could forbid such frivolities.

The following week it was the turn of Fr. Gerry Marsden SJ to be wined and dined. He too, was leaving after three and a half years as Spiritual Director. Staff and students were accompanied by the domestic staff for the meal at the *Centro Segoviano*. Fr. Gerry was presented with gifts from students, domestic staff and colleagues on the staff.

Fr. Pat Mulcahy of Salford Diocese joined us for Fr. Gerry's leaving meal and sampled a little Valladolid community spirit before giving June's Day of Recollection. This humble and articulate man inspired many of us with his deep insights into his faith and love of Christ, all expressed delightfully through his evident knowledge of and love for English Literature.

During the exam preparation week, Fr. Gerry visited Fatima with a coach load of pilgrims and returned with lipstick on his collar and many a tale to tell. The *Fundación Hispano-Británica* held their annual gathering in Madrid in the presence of the King's Sister, Princesa Margarita and the King and Queen of Bulgaria. Mgr. Paul Smith, accompanied by Pilar Garcés García, our Spanish tutor, swanned down to Madrid for a glittering night with the rich, the beautiful and the famous. The soirées did not end there for a few nights later the Rector was off again to Madrid, this time to the Queen's Birthday Party at the Ambassador's residence. Unfortunately for the Rector, this time he was only accompanied by Fr.

Parkinson. Nevertheless, Mgr. Smith was mentioned in the society pages of one of the greatest national tabloids. We looked in vain for the pictures in *iHola!* The next night the Rector was back in his airline seat, still warm from the last trip home, on the way to visit the Old Boys of the Valladolid Association in Droitwich.

Meanwhile the midnight oil was being burnt by our leavers John Morgan and Darren Reid who were in the final preparation stages for the STB degree examination. After an arduous wait for results, they were both relieved to hear that they had passed with the classification *notable*. Before they left for England we celebrated one last Mass of farewell for Darren and John, before being ordained to the priesthood along with Chris O'Connor during the month of July.

Our return to Country House was marked by a presentation to Santiago, the faithful resident caretaker of the House, of the papal award *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* in recognition of his sixty-two years of service to the College. He was joined for the Mass which was celebrated in the Country House chapel not only by students and staff, but also by his family and neighbours. As might be expected, this was followed by a sumptuous supper of roast suckling lamb, under the Arches. By the end of June virtually everyone had returned home, just leaving Fr. Francis Parkinson to hold the fort.



Plaza de Zorrilla, Valladolid.



Plaza de la Universidad, Valladolid.

FATHER PETER ANTHONY LEES, 1929-1994

An Appreciation by Fr. Tony Joyce

My first visual encounter with Peter was not face to face but through being shown an early post-war 8 mm colour film (a big Kodak commercial breakthrough!) A pre-war Albanian (of the College not of the country) had visited Valladolid and Country House a few summers after students had returned to St. Alban's. Now, in the early sixties, the same veteran Old Boy was back at Viana once more and had brought with him the silent colour film. A most pleasant and instructive evening was spent in the lounge after supper with reminiscences of pre-war and early post-war Valladolid. The highlight, of course, was the showing of the film - in the absence of latter-day TV and Video, it is difficult to describe the special excitement of a motion picture on Valladolid. The footage moved from various scenes of the College and the town out to Viana where the students were then spending their summer break. (The practice of students returning home only once during the six-year course was very much *de rigueur*.)

Included in the views of Country House was a scene depicting a group of students threshing out corn close by the old water-tank which adjoins Santiago's present-day dwelling. At one point the camera appeared to zoom in on an individual attired in *alpargatas* and large khaki shorts. He was sweating profusely as he set about his task. Something about his physiognomy singled him out from the other markedly leaner characters around him. Suddenly, an older student in the lounge blurted out "Look! That's big Peter Lees." Years later, having read and seen a few re-runs of 'The Bridge over the River Kwai', that particular Viana scene is often juxtaposed in my mind.

Peter was born at Wolverhampton on 19 November 1929 in an area of the West Midlands which was then noted for its industry, both heavy and light, though now much changed. His family moved home a couple of times but always within the same general area. While Peter was coming to the end of his primary school education, the then Parish Priest seemed to have detected the possible stirrings of a vocation to the priesthood. As a result Peter spent the years of his secondary education at Cotton College in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

In 1947 Peter was sent out to Valladolid as part of a pioneering group of students who were to re-establish College life after the War. He would often speak in latter years of how difficult things were initially, particularly the rule of only returning home once in the six years. However, he was determined to make the best of his lot and to be positive about his circumstances. Once again he would very frequently reflect with much affection and obvious emotion on his student days and underline time and again the spirit of friendship and companionship

among the student body. Those of us who were students in the sixties know what this *esprit de corps* was about, as I am sure do other generations of students.

Those years as a student at Valladolid had many a story attached to them for Peter. Some will have heard of the 21st birthday cake which was surreptitiously smuggled into the College after Peter's only home leave. His birthday was the following November. Different accounts have come down of who exactly comprised the inner core who consumed the said delicacy. What is not disputed is the location where the cake was kept hidden - in the roof rafters of the public room below the students' lounge!

Studies, mainly through the medium of Latin, provided their own obstacle course with not the least obstacle being the Spanish pronunciation of the universal language of the Church. Then too, the distance of England from Valladolid and the sometimes very poor communications by letter or telephone meant that up-to-date information about the English scene was all too often sorely lacking. In this context, Peter took great relish in telling the story - against himself - of a particular Scripture oral examination. Having given as much as he could in succinct replies to the questions asked by the Prof, the latter, no doubt in the kind hope of adding a little to Peter's score, asked the question 'What well-known Englishman has recently translated the Bible into English from the original languages?'. Well, this was a bit of a googly. Yes, thank you. He had understood the question. He was trying to think. Help came from a solid comradely source behind Peter. "Tell him anyone, Peter. Say Mister Black", whispered a student waiting next in line. Pouncing on this juicy morsel Peter responded with serene conviction to his Professor, 'Señor Black'. Needless to say, the extra mark was not forthcoming. (Latter commentators think that the said Englishman might have been Monsignor Ronald Knox, though none is prepared to lay money on it!).

A sense of fun, a fairness in judgement, a listening ear, meant that Peter always found a welcome, be it in a gathered company or on a one-to-one basis. Because of his great love of and loyalty to the College, Peter made many a journey to Valladolid. A goodly number of past students and staff found his visits reassuring and refreshing. He was equally welcoming and generous in hospitality to any Old Boys who made visits to him in the various parishes in which he served in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. To have been on holiday with Peter - to Spain, where else? - is to have experienced a memorable time with a catalogue of incidents to recall with much mirth later. Some years ago Peter and I journeyed out to Valladolid by car, and on the way we took in a camping holiday along the then unspoilt northern coast of Spain. Upon first using our small two-man ridge tent we discovered how cramped it really was, but we settled down happily enough for the night. I was woken from deep sleep by a gentle but persistent pushing and became sufficiently conscious to make out the words, "Shh...Tony...Shh". Apparently my contented snoring had prevented any shut-eye on Peter's part. Having apologised, I told him not to worry and to go off to sleep himself first. This he promptly did and it seemed only to be a matter of seconds before the tent reverberated to his own version of nocturnal horse rattlings. I had not the heart to disturb him!

Peter's loyalty was rewarded with being invited to join the Board of Trustees of the College. He was a staunch ally indeed and in his company any bishop would find a rock-like defence of Valladolid and what it stood for. If the occasion were appropriate a further question would be posed: "My Lord, are you thinking of sending any students out to the College?"

Among the varied talents with which he was blessed, Peter enjoyed a fine singing voice in the baritone range. Apparently in his earlier days at Cotton College he was mortified when his pure treble voice began to break. Happily, what eventually replaced it was to be the cause of much fun and entertainment for onlookers. At Valladolid he had been appointed choirmaster and his love of plainchant blossomed. As a priest he was to use this particular talent to great effect culminating, during his time as Parish Priest of Lichfield, in the foundation of the Lichfield Catholic Olde Time Music Hall. The annual event was a continuous sell-out with a consequent healthy injection of funds to help offset the initial huge parish debt. The event, in which Peter always figured prominently, also gave a high profile to the Catholic community of the city.

Those who were in close contact with Peter were somewhat taken aback when the news broke that he was terminally ill. The end, mercifully, was not to be very long in coming. Somehow this seemed right for one who had lived and loved both life and people so fully. The immense turn-out of both priests and laity at the Requiem Mass and Christian Farewell spoke eloquently and movingly of much love for this priest of God, a faithful servant of his Archdiocese, and an Albanian whose life was a credit to the College. Requiescat in pace.



Fr. Peter in classic pose in the student's lounge, 1985 with Fr. Des Sexton and Fr. Andy Ison.

Fr. Andrew Lyons, Secretary of the Valladolid Association writes:

"Hello, Father speaking..." Neither the greeting nor the tune ever changed. Peter's standard opening when answering the telephone, had long since become something of a catchphrase. I recall thinking, as I returned to Devon having seen him laid to rest, that the world was now an emptier place for the absence of those

three words, and I resolved then to make my own personal tribute to a man whom I came to know purely by chance, but whom it was to be my honour to count among my dearest friends.

Whether it was because he was among the first students to return to the College when it reopened after the Second World War or for some other reason, Peter's love and affection for the English College in Valladolid was almost unparalleled. He never missed an opportunity to make a trip to his old *Alma Mater*, and be it for a vacation at Country House or the formality of the Fourth Centenary celebrations, a visit to Valladolid was, for Peter, a visit home.

Be it in the company of dignitaries or prelates, or a group of small children from a local parish, Peter's manner and approach to the situation never varied. Peter simply held court. His large stature overflowed from whichever chair he was sitting on, and the ash from his cigarette "dropped as the gentle rain from heaven upon himself and the ground beneath." Peter could never hit an ashtray square on. Above all though, his warmth and personality filled the room, and all present could not fail to recognise in this larger than life character an immense man of God.

It was upon the students of the College, however, that Peter lavished his greatest affection. He seemed most in his element when surrounded by them. He saw them as the hope of the priesthood, and considered them his special charge. I remember one night, not many hours before dawn, being woken by the sound of distant voices. He and I were spending a week at the College. I was drawn to the student's lounge where I found him, surrounded by a group of seminarians, and engaged in some theological discussion, the earnestness of which would rarely be found outside the small hours. He was obviously having a grand time, and a minor detail such as the approaching bell for Morning Prayer was not going to spoil his enjoyment.

In keeping with his stature, everything about Peter was on something of a grand scale - even his telephone bill. Fr. Tony Wilcox, who preached the homily at his Requiem, joked that shares in British Telecom slumped on the Stock Exchange when hearing of Peter's death. Out of interest I checked; they did indeed.

"Hello, Father speaking..." No, we shall not hear these words again on dialling 0889 881324, but in our memories of a truly kind and special man, Peter is very much alive. I would like to think that as he is welcomed at the gates of heaven, he is greeted with the words, "Hello, Peter: this is your Father speaking..."

May he rest in peace.

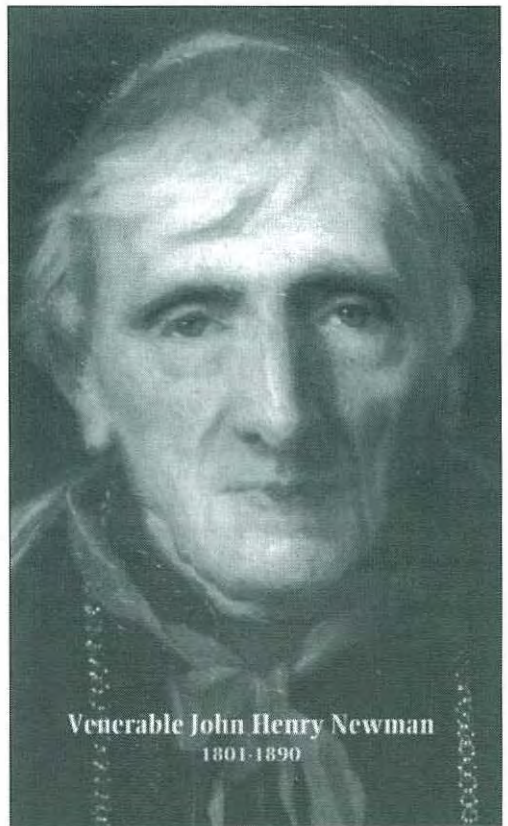
COR AD COR LOQUITUR

Fr. Francis Parkinson

It is hard to think of two more divergent European cultures than that of Victorian England and that of late Twentieth Century Spain. To some extent the publication of some of the more important of Cardinal Newman's works into Spanish serves to bridge that gap. Fr. Francis Parkinson, lecturer in Pastoral Theology in College, here charts the development of the Cardinal Newman Chair in Theology at the Pontifical University of Salamanca.

John Henry Cardinal Newman has never been a well known figure in Spanish circles, despite there being some of his works translated. But this year has seen a change in fortunes for the study of Newman, a change which has unfolded over the past few years, and in which the College has been in the forefront of developments.

Back in 1992 an initiative of the English College in Valladolid and the Scots College in Salamanca led to the founding of a Chair in Theology in the Pontifical University of Salamanca. The Chair has as its title "The John Henry Newman Chair of Theology" and has the aim of studying the life and work of Cardinal Newman. Unlike Chairs in British Universities we do not fund a Professor to teach any subject, rather it acts more as a resource for the study of the figure and the work of John Henry Newman. Both Colleges agree to give a certain amount of money each year and then books are bought, courses and conferences are sponsored and Newman's work is generally disseminated throughout the Spanish speaking world. One of the avowed aims of the Chair is to promote good, critical translations of the works of Newman.



The Patron of the Chair.

The Chair is under the guidance of the Dean of Theology of Salamanca, Fr. Felix García, a Scripture scholar. He has decided to appoint a committee to act in

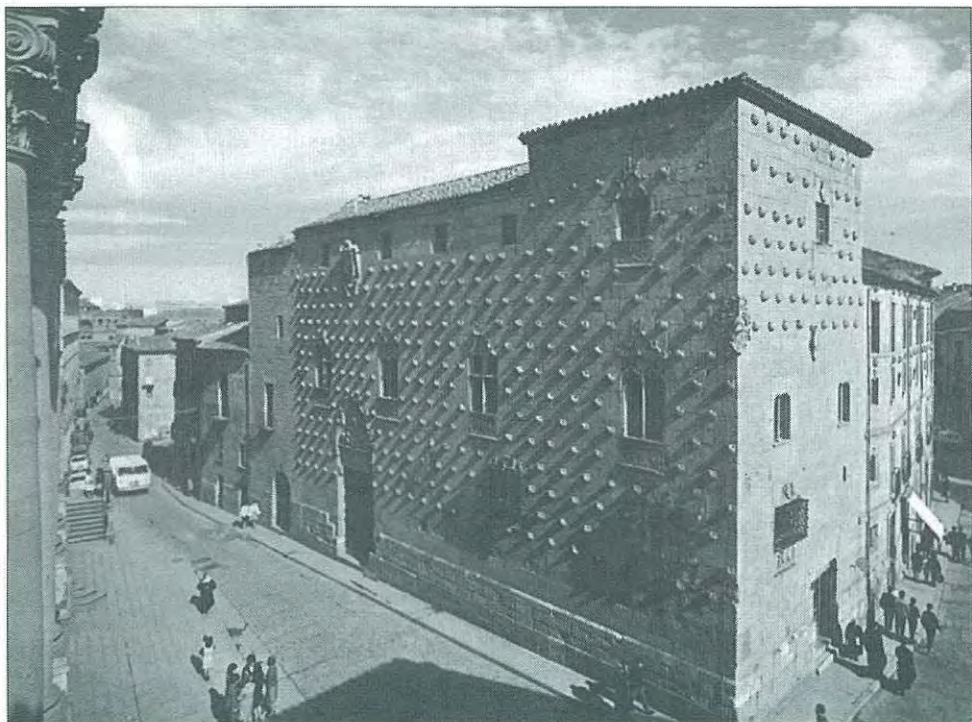
his name and to keep a tally on the activities of the Chair. At the present moment this committee comprises of Fr. Fernando Garrapucho, lecturer in Ecclesiology at the University; Fr. Adolfo González Montes, again from the "Ponte" and Director of their Ecumenical Institute. He is also a member of the Roman Commission for Ecumenism and was highly involved in the Roman response to the General Synod decision to ordain women to the priesthood. Also involved on the committee is Fr. Denis Carlin, Vice Rector of the Scots and myself from College. Also at certain meetings the Rectors of both Colleges are present, to give their "notional assent" to what has been planned. The committee runs the Chair and plans the activities through the year. Meetings are normally held every term when ideas are bounded around and that year's courses are planned. It is perhaps a credit to everyone involved that this year we have become the most productive of the five Chairs which Salamanca has in its faculties.

Various conferences have been held thus far and in each of the courses the College's involvement has been highly valued. The official launch took place in October 1992 with the presence of His Grace Archbishop Couve de Murville, Archbishop of Birmingham. With his knowledge of Birmingham, and his wit he brought a fitting grandeur to the occasion. He told the assembled professors of the state of play regarding the process for canonisation, warning them that if they wished to be canonised then they must be careful not to write too much! This was followed by the inaugural lecture given by Fr. James Tollhurst (former Spiritual Director, now a member of the Oratory), and the day finished with the traditional Spanish "fiesta" meal in a local restaurant.

The beginning of 1993 saw the Chair celebrating Christian Unity Week with a series of conferences on Anglicanism. Two students from College gave a personal reflection on their own journeys of conversion from Anglicanism to Catholicism. Both Julian Green (present 5th year) and Andrew Goodman (ordained 1995) managed to allay a few misconceptions and also give a living hint of the journey which some 150 years ago John Henry Newman undertook. These testimonies were followed later that year by a course on "The life and theology of Cardinal Newman" given by Fr. Peter Collins and Fr. Francis Parkinson.

The following year a course on "Aspects of the Ecclesiology of Cardinal Newman" was the activity for the academic year 1993-1994. This time the course was led by Mgr. Ian Murray who was then Rector of the Scots and Fr. James Hanvey SJ from St. Aloysius, Glasgow. I also helped in the series of lectures on Newman's concept of the Church. Hopefully my presentation on "The influence of John Henry Cardinal Newman on modern ecclesiology" will appear in *Dialogo Ecuénico*, a journal published by the Pontifical University.

The most recent activity of the Chair is the one that has now hit the Spanish ecclesiastical press, although in typical style, not quite getting all the facts in the right order. The Chair has sponsored a translation and critical edition of the *Via Media of the Anglican Church*, arguably the most important Anglican work of Newman. This was due for launch in a course led by the translator Fr. Aureli Boix from Barcelona, and Fr. Fernando Garrapucho. However at the last moment the



The Casa de Conchas in Salamanca, with the 'Ponte' on the left.

editors managed to misread the disk and wiped out all the indexes. So the launch had to wait for two weeks, but then by some miracle the book made its appearance just as the Bishops' Committee were visiting. Did someone hear or was Newman trying to tell us something? For he himself had forbidden a Spanish translation of the work, and the translator was very wary of taking on a Venerable.

Cardinal Newman once wrote:

"I wish to enlarge your knowledge, to cultivate your reason, to get an insight into the relation of truth to truth, to learn to view things as they are, to understand how faith and reason stand to each other, what are the bases and principles of Catholicism." (*Lectures on the present position of Catholics* (1851) p 373)

This perhaps sums up the whole impetus of the thought which lay behind the events noted above. Far from just being a diary of events what you have seen thus far is the story of how the thought of an Englishman of the last century has been progressively diffused into a Spanish culture. At the time of writing, Spain is in the height of "election fever" with each party vying with each other as to who is telling the truth. Newman wasn't concerned with the rights and wrongs of political truth but was concerned with looking at the complete Truth found in the Bible and in Tradition. He was a great Victorian Oratorian; perhaps he can speak to a modern day Spain.

This is where we, as members of the organising committee of the Chair, hope to develop. We cannot merely see in Newman the response to all our questions; we cannot look to him as the blue-print for all solutions, but we can see in him one who can teach the world of today the values of reason and the truth which lay behind the hope that all of us have. Newman, in his own time stood up for what he believed in and stood firm to that conviction; the world of today, particularly the United Kingdom and Spain needs men and women who can be firm in that same conviction, who can stand up for truth when faced with lies; who can speak boldly and unashamedly about the Gospel and about the hope that it brings. Perhaps the example of Newman can be just one more to follow in that quest.



The writing's on the wall: Memorial of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Salamanca in 1982.

The publication of the *Via Media* is quite a historical event. It is the first time that this work has appeared in Spanish, and as far as we can ascertain the critical tools that it uses are also a first. This work will bring the Spanish society closer to the reality which in Britain we take so much for granted, namely the Anglican Church. Newman started out at looking at the Prophetical Office of the Church and soon realised that it was folly to do this as a separate part to the other two offices of teaching and sanctifying. For all three form a unit which cannot simply be split into three different functions, rather they are an organic whole. What the work tries to do is to explain this treatise in a language which is accessible to the majority. Indeed the work is easier to read in its Spanish translation than in its

original English! It is hoped that the Spanish Church, by taking and reading the *Via Media*, may understand a little more of the Anglican Church and so grow in a deeper understanding of the Ecumenical role of the Church so highlighted by Vatican II. There is far to go in this enterprise.

It can be thus said that the Chair in Theology under the patronage of Newman is beginning to bear fruit. It is hoped that next year the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* will be ready for publication. This is again being sponsored by the Chair and again will include not only a translation but a critical apparatus. Once again the hope is that the reader will draw closer to Newman and understand a little more of his thought and his influence in the modern Church. Then, looking into the future, there is a possibility that *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine* will be translated into Spanish.

Newman and Salamanca is hardly a pairing which would immediately spring to mind, yet the Pontifical University has provided us with the place in which to work out what Newman himself maintained: "Theology is the fundamental and regulating principle of the whole Church...it is the subject matter, the formal cause, the expression, of the Prophetic office, and being as such has created both the Regal Office and the Sacerdotal" (*Via Media*).

It is to be hoped that the Spanish translations of Newman's works, which represent a cultural, historical and ecclesial situation that is quite different from our own now in Britain, to say nothing of Spain, will allow more people to come to an understanding of what it means for the Church to be Catholic, that is inclusive and universal. This is something essential for evangelization: that Catholic Christians begin to understand and live the wider vision of the Church which is one of the great challenges of Vatican II, a challenge to which Newman contributed in his prophetic works. Thanks to Valladolid and Salamanca, Newman's thoughts can now begin to reach the large numbers of Hispanic speakers throughout the world. The connection is really only beginning. Let us hope that despite the huge cultural divide Newman's ideas will be able in some measure to speak to Spanish Christians today, so that his motto might be given a new meaning: 'Cor ad Cor loquitur'.



Plaza Mayor, Valladolid.



The Campo Grande.

THE HEROIC FAILURE

John Short

When, in 1992, our Old Boys' Association decided to admit laymen who had spent some time of discernment in the College it dismissed any idea of them being 'spoiled priests'. In this article, John Short, himself an Old Boy and a layman, as well as journalist and lecturer at Trinity and All Saints' College, Leeds, traces the short but heroic career of another lay Old Boy, David Lord.

Although the College celebrated its Fourth Centenary in 1989, it is unlikely that more than 5,000 students have ever had a claim to be called Vallisoletans. That's about the same number that the University of Leeds admits each year. So, whatever else we former students have in common, we have a rarity value. Not that this is too much of a boast; an even rarer value is shared by those who occupied death cells on Dartmoor. When you consider, however, that six of our 5,000 received the Vatican's good housekeeping seal of sanctity (grade 1), it allows us by modest proxy a mild degree of proper pride.

What got me thinking about this was a walk last summer down the elegant streets of Bath, a city that shares certain qualities with Spain - an abundance of architectural beauty treated with much the same profligacy. Occasionally my eye caught one of those enamelled plaques that tell us somebody famous once lived there. Usually they were somebody so famous that few of us can remember what they were famous for.

After a while it was the houses that had no plaques that began to interest me more. I assumed that people lived in them and wondered what they had not done to deserve such an anonymous snub. Since I was on the way to visit the brother of a former Vallisoletan, it led me to think that many of us once described as spoiled priests had once, in a minor way, shared such a snub.

True, amends have been made of late. And to be fair we spoiled ones have not exactly set the world, secular or religious, on fire. Few of us, so far as I know, have achieved anything which obliged our fellow citizens to record their gratitude in permanent form. But the man whose brother I was visiting in Bath was an exception. He has several monuments, some quite spectacular. The one I like best, however, is quite modest: a stained glass window in a Cotswold church that dates back to the Knights Templar.

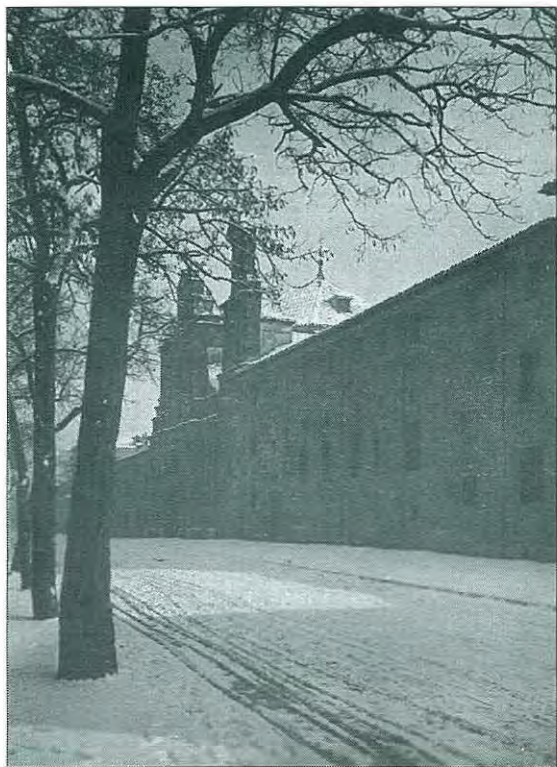
Those unfortunate enough not to be familiar with the Cotswolds will not know Down Ampney, indeed the only memory it may stir is the hymn tune composed by Vaughan Williams who was born in the village. It is one of a quartet of hamlets sharing the name of a rivulet that runs through the district; the other

three are Ampney St. Mary's, Ampney St. Peter's and Ampney Crucis, all indicative of the Catholic past which must have made my fellow 'spoiled priest', David Anthony Samuel Lord, feel quite at home. For there was no doubt that he could say with Belloc:

'This is the faith that I have held and hold
and this is that in which I mean to die.'

The Ballad of Unsuccessful Men could well have been one of David's favourites. He had "failed" to be a priest, he was later to "fail" as a professional writer, though he did have some success and several short stories published, one in *Tales of Dread* by Philip Allen. And finally and fatally he was to "fail" again. Like most of his attempted "careers", he gave them a fair chance. As a writer he had given up his day job in a chemist's, left home in Wrexham, moved into digs in Callow Street, just down the road from London's Brompton Oratory; as a seminarist he had spent five years at St. Mary's, Aberystwyth, before the two at Valladolid.

But in the end realism seemed to have won the day and he joined the RAF in 1936, four years after leaving Spain "*dubitans de vocatione*", working his way



Calle Don Sancho in the 1930s.

through the ranks with his eye firmly fixed on being a pilot - quite an ambition in those far-off Biggles days. Again he showed the same determination to give this career his best shot. He won his wings in 1939 with a grading that was only average. He gave up smoking cigarettes, thinking this might have affected his eyes, he went running to keep fit, drank little, never swore - his nickname "Lumme" is said to come from it being his strongest expletive. On the whole a most atypical Vallisoletan, priest or layman!

Within a few years of becoming a pilot he was rated officially "exceptional" - and proved it by landing a blazing Dakota at night after overflying the Japanese-occupied jungles of Burma. He had crashed earlier in the deserts of North Africa when

shot down by enemy fighters. Again he landed safely, led the survivors of his plane on a ten mile trek and was airborne again next day. I guess he was one of the rare students to whom the Martyrs in the corridor doff their haloes at night

when they talk to each other during the *magnum silentium*.

Like the Martyrs, David's fame was largely to be posthumous, something he would have appreciated. There was nothing of the stereotypical whiz-bang and Brylcream pilot about him. Publicity was something he positively shunned. His father and mother accompanied him to Buckingham Palace to receive his Distinguished Flying Cross from the King, and his father, Sam, remembered: "Instead of being photographed as the majority did, he bundled his mother and me in a taxi which he had kept waiting all the time we were inside and said: 'I'd rather have a tooth out'".

Back in the hotel David told his father, a former Warrant Officer with the Welsh Fusiliers:

"I didn't win that medal. Our Lady guided me all the time and deserves the glory." Whatever other things he failed at, his faith was not among them. He took part in the invasion of Europe, carrying an unarmed medical team into Normandy on the night before D-day. Flak damaged the rudder, elevator and hydraulic system but he got back and landed safely. Just after this he wrote to his mother and father: "These are momentous days, and I thank God to be taking a small part in what is going on". Momentous or not, he still had, metaphorically at least, his two feet firmly planted on the ground. In the same letter to his parents he said: "I hope to be back at seven tonight and after a bath, dinner, a beer and a rest, I will write you a longer letter than this note".

He never got the chance. On the 19th September 1944, the third day of the battle to take the bridges across the Rhine at Arnhem, David died. It was the third successive day he had made the perilous flight to Arnhem from Down Ampney. Each day the German defences had intensified and the circle tightened around the surviving Red Berets.

Fog delayed take off on 19th and he went to confession and received communion on camp. The chaplain later recalled that he had asked David what his chances were that day and he had replied: "None". The fog lifted just after noon and an hour later 16 Dakotas of 271 Squadron were airborne for Drop Zone V on the North West outskirts of Arnhem.



The College Patio.

Just before 3pm, David's plane, KG374, began its descent through the swirling haze. At 1500 feet it broke out of cloud and into fierce anti-aircraft fire. The starboard engine burst into flames and lit up the sweat of the despatchers struggling to release the heavy panniers jammed on the tracks in the fuselage.

The first run released all but two of the panniers. David checked that his crew were uninjured and gave the fatal command to rejoin the dropping circuit for a second time. Minutes stretched into eternity as the unarmed blazing aircraft made its slow turn to join the dropping circuit again, British paratroopers and Panzers stopped fighting and stood transfixed at what was going on a mere 500 feet above their heads. The last panniers were released on target, David ordered his crew to bail out and stayed at the control to give them a chance. Then the plane, like a shot bird, folded its wings and crashed.

The only survivor was the navigator Harry King who had been blown out of the open door while helping the despatchers fit their parachutes. His watch stopped at 3.11pm when he hit the ground and he was taken prisoner. David had "failed" again, gloriously. For unknown to him the dropping zone had been overrun by the Germans and the sacrifice of the crew, his co-pilot was only 19 years old, had been in vain. But the story doesn't end there. Major General Urquhart, an Amhem survivor, wrote later of what he called "those terrible eight minutes" which anyone who witnessed would not want to forget. I think the General was using the word "terrible" in the same way as the introit does: "Terribilis est", rather than Monsignor Henson's "terrible" joke to newcomers to the College. (C.f. Fr Peter Lees' memoirs in *The Vallisoletan* No 3).

When the Americans freed the Prisoner of War camp where David's navigator had been held, Harry King came home to Britain on leave. But the month after victory in Europe he was flown back to Arnheim again with a VIP party and took them to the spot where the plane had crashed. The Dakota was a burnt-out shell, the airframe twisted and the two engines buried deep in the ground. Maintenance records identified the engine numbers as that of David's aircraft. Close by was a small square wired off to prevent the cattle straying on it. Seven bodies were recovered and each identified by Harry Clarke as members of the crew. All were reburied in the military cemetery at Oosterbeek.

David was recommended for the Victoria Cross and he became the only member of the whole of transport command ever to win the top award for valour. His parents went to Buckingham Palace just before Christmas to receive the medal from King George VI and his father, Sam, wrote: "The Victoria Cross is, of course, the highest award he could have in this Empire of ours, and the fact that God has given him that, encourages us to believe that he, at least, is on the lowest step in Heaven, and that will suit us admirably".

A brief extract from a letter sent to David's parents by his friend and fellow pilot, "Flash" Kelly, suggests that David may have even better reasons for a place in Heaven:

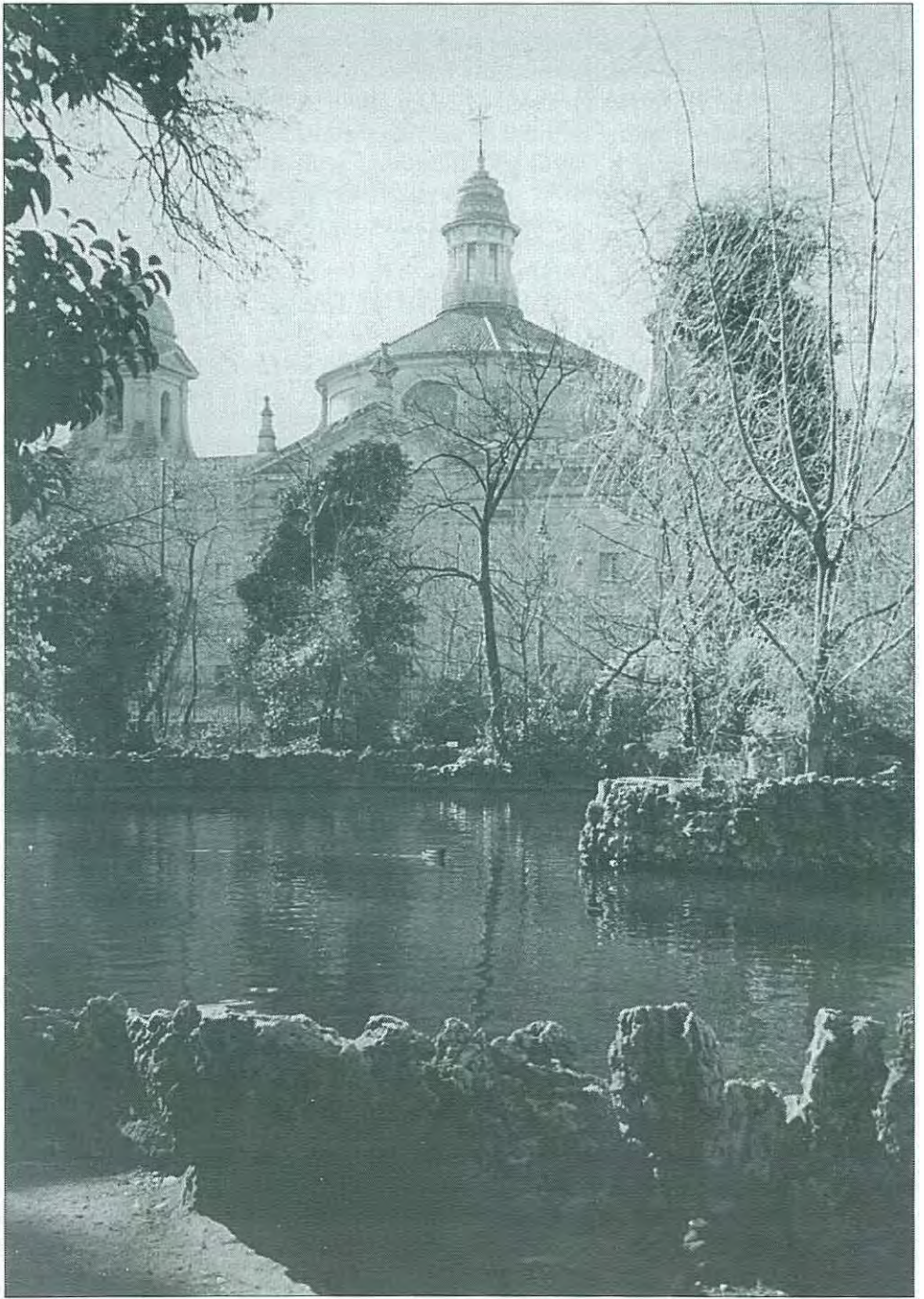
"...his log book contains full details of his efforts in serving his King and country and the reason for this letter is to let you know ... how

truly and well David served his God. No-one ever heard David mutter an immodest word. His strongest expression ("lumme") became his nickname. His cheerfulness, advice and generous praise did so much to raise morale on various detachments overseas.

"I shall never forget an ancient bed-ridden Belgian priest (it was Fr. Leopold) in Lahore telling me how he was comforted by David's visits and how much David's present of an invalid's chair had brought him. Other instances spring to mind of Saturday night parties at a planters' club in Assam which David used to attend with his hosts, Alice and Arthur Mabey. I alone knew that David's early disappearances meant that he was setting off to visit Fr. Leopold or attend confession."

Last year a Dakota in David's colours joined the legendary Battle of Britain Memorial Flight of Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane. But I think the old Vallisoletan would get more satisfaction from the stained glass window in that Cotswold church. It seems somehow an altogether more fitting monument for yet another of the college's glorious "failures". Whenever I visit it I recall the envoi of Belloc's ballad:

Prince, may I venture (since it's only you)
To speak discreetly of the crucified
He was extremely successful too
The devil didn't like him
and he died.



The 'Augs' as seen from the Campo Grande.

ALL CHANGE FOR POLAND

Jan Nowotnik

Jan Nowotnik third year student, recounts how he was impressed by the differences between Poland past and present on his recent visit to his father's native country.

When I was asked to contribute to this year's magazine, I thought immediately of my trip to Poland last year. Not wishing to make our regular readers think that all I do is go on holiday (although that does seem to take up a considerable amount of my time!), I feel that it would be good to reflect on what I found in the new Poland, as well as recount some of the experiences and emotions that my visit engendered.

Last summer, after finishing my pastoral placement, I headed off with my parents to Poland. My father had decided that we would go on the coach as this was the cheapest way to travel and also took us from our home city of Birmingham straight to the city of Gliwice in Poland where my relations live. I was very apprehensive about such a long journey but once on the coach, having started to talk to some of my fellow passengers, the time soon passed and after thirty hours we had arrived at our destination.

My family came to meet us at the coach station, eager to catch up on all the gossip from England and also my experiences of Spain. I must admit that I was fairly tired and not eager to speak Polish, but they wouldn't take no for an answer so I said the first thing that came into my head about my life in Spain. After a massive lunch and a short rest (the Poles haven't got to appreciate the *siesta*), it was time to catch up on family gossip. My father seemed to spend most of his time translating for my mother, who doesn't speak Polish, or explaining what I was trying to say, because I have forgotten much of my Polish since being exposed to the Spanish language.

It soon became evident that we were not going to be sitting around all the time eating Polish sausage and drinking vodka, but that we were going to do some travelling around as well. This pleased me as I wanted to visit the Marian shrine at Częstochowa and go to Kraków again, both of which we did. We also visited the site of the former concentration camp at Auschwitz. What can I say about Auschwitz? It was very different to how I expected it to be. Having watched the film "Schindler's List" I just didn't know what to think. As we travelled to the town on the train, for some reason I thought that the train might be taking us to the entrance to the camp as it would have done when it was in use. However, the train stopped at the station in the town. Getting off the train was a very strange experience. I realised that I could be getting off at any place in Poland. The town

seemed very similar to any other town, only for the fact that it had such a sinister history. We decided to walk to the camp as it wasn't too far away from the centre of the town.



A Polish street scene.

I walked ahead of my parents with my cousins and as I approached the main gates I felt myself go all cold inside and had a sense of morbid curiosity about what I was going to see. The entrance block was like that of any other museum, a place where guides to the area could be found and a film of footage from the war could also be seen. As we left the main block we crossed the courtyard to where the entrance would have been.

There was a sign just before the gates asking the visitors to treat the place with respect as one would do on entering any other cemetery. My father, who could have been incarcerated in this camp himself, looked dreadfully pale as we entered through the gates. The sign in German above these gates which read "Work makes you free" seemed very ironic. There was nothing free about this place apart from that

the modern day visitor doesn't have to pay anything as the Polish government pays for its upkeep. All the visitors remained very quiet as they passed through these very sacred places.

Some buildings in which prisoners were kept now hold exhibitions that relate to different countries. For obvious reasons we went into the one dedicated to the Poles. In this building there was row upon row of pictures and paintings depicting life for the Poles in the camp. There were also models of men wearing the blue striped uniform of an Auschwitz prisoner. What was most frightening was a list of names of all the Polish inmates including someone with my name. This realization frightened me a little and I found myself stopping to pray for his soul. This may seem over sentimental, but at that sudden moment I felt very pained and anguished by all that I was seeing around me.

My father was walking around in a complete daze, not really taking all of it in. I was finding myself feeling very sick indeed. After about ten minutes we left this building only to take ourselves off to even more harrowing places. What I

think struck me as we walked around were the number of young people that were there. Among them were many Jews, obviously some of them had some connection with the place, through relations that could have been sent there. The sense of silence and awe was really something to behold.

From the Polish block we made our way to the "Death Block" via the "Wall of Death" and the torture rooms. The wall by which many prisoners were shot was a very ordinary wall with a very horrific story behind it. In my guide to the camp it said that shootings could take place after any roll calls or even randomly during the day. I stopped to say a prayer for all those who had lost their lives at the side of this wall. I think what moved me most was a group of Jewish people on pilgrimage to the camp who were quietly singing prayers at the foot of the wall and laying wreaths. This sight moved my mother to tears and my father couldn't say anything at all. The huge number of candles that were already at the bottom of the wall, so early on in the day, spoke to me not only of the huge number of people passing through but also of their great reverence and devotion.

Moving on to the "Block 11", we were subjected to even more pain. This block is the only one in the camp preserved as it was found at the end of the war. It showed the sleeping conditions of the inmates and the sanitary conditions. It seems hardly possible that anyone could have survived in those dreadful conditions, but the miracle of the situation is that they did. Rooms where people were interrogated also formed part of this block, probably for the close proximity to the Wall. A musty, very damp smell still lingered in the air, and the colossal amounts of people visiting it made it quite hard to breath.

We went into the basement of this block as well. This is the part that held the places of torture where men and women were made to stand four to a very small cell for many hours, some until they died. These cells were only made for one person who was crouching down, so just imagine four in that cell. Alongside these were other cells, including the starvation cells in which prisoners would be kept until they died, being given no food or drink. It was in one such cell as these that St. Maximilian Kolbe died. In the cell in which he lived his last pain-filled days, but days of immense trust in the Lord, there now stands a large Paschal candle which burns day and night, not just remembering his life but those of all the prisoners. It is a symbol of the hope of the resurrection and life that came after Auschwitz whether through liberation or through death. I think what I realised most of all as I walked through this part of the camp was the bravery of the people who suffered this existence, something which I find very hard to imagine, but for which I hold them in very great esteem.

As we left this block in the vain hope of returning to less horrific scenes we weren't really consoled with what we were about to see. Passing through some of the other exhibitions was a real eye opener. The mountains of clothes, suitcases, cooking pots, teeth and shoes that were on display was breathtaking. These things had been collected by the Nazis who didn't have the chance to destroy them before liberation. My mother commented that it must have been impossible to keep all this a secret and she found it hard to believe that there were, and still are, some people who don't believe that it happened.

The worst part of the whole visit, and also for us the last section of the camp that we saw, was the "Gas Chambers". These cruel places of torture and incineration which were the brainchild of Goebbels stand today as a monument to all those who passed through them and became martyrs. I really feel that it is the only word to describe them. They were men and women who died because of their race and religion in the face of a wicked ideology which sought racial 'purity'. It is very hard to describe what I felt as I explored the chamber and the places of incineration, but the relief on coming out of the underground bunker was certainly great for all of us. To try to imagine too much of what went on in there was just impossible and I could see that it was hurting my father so we decided to leave.

I felt a certain relief as I left the camp. In the museum I bought a book that related in words and pictures the history of the camp. This kept me occupied as we went back on the train. It gave an in-depth look at the way of life, the tortures that were used and the appalling conditions there. There were also some interesting articles by historians who tried to link up some reasons for the prejudices that there were and the type of people who were incarcerated and executed. It was more than just the Jews.

As I write this in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the camp I feel one should pay tribute to all the people who suffered there and all those who fought hard to liberate the oppressed people during the war years. It would be a dreadful shame if their courage and their bravery and the hope that they bore should be forgotten. Thankfully we live in a world of relative peace and the prospect of another world war seems almost impossible. I think that the stark reminder of Auschwitz must serve as a reminder which should help to make nations think twice about any future conflict. It is painful to think about the hurt, humiliation and suffering that man can inflict on man.

So our visit to Auschwitz was one of the "highlights" of our visit to Poland last year. When you have been there once I don't think that it is a place that one would visit again in a hurry. I am grateful, though, that I had the opportunity to go there and was able to see this great monument to the history of the war. I am grateful too that my father escaped the pain and hardship of being in that dreadful place. I think it was a harrowing experience for him to go there as it brought back memories of his own capture by the Germans and his enforced work on farms in Germany. I, as a young person can often forget what it must have been like and can shrug it off all too easily, but I feel that from time to time it does me good to remember it.

On our travels through Poland we also visited the Marian Shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Czestochowa. The centre of the pilgrim's visit is the icon of the Virgin Mary which is solemnly unveiled twice a day. The hordes of pilgrims from all parts of the globe shows that since the breakdown of Communism, the shrines can be visited more easily. It was impressive to see the great Polish devotion on such a grand scale: lots of old ladies with their rosary beads and the huge number of young people also made for a very joyful atmosphere. Having missed the timetabled masses of the morning we were able to join some rather animated

Italians as they celebrated Mass. Knowing Spanish it was relatively easy to follow the Mass and the homily that was given too. The number of masses that were being continually and simultaneously celebrated at the side altars shows that the Poles still have a long way to go in certain areas before the reforms of the Second Vatican Council come into place.

The icon of the Virgin has been a centre of devotion since the Middle Ages as it was one of the icons that sustained the Poles against the invading Russian forces earlier on in their colourful history. The tears on the icon are said to come from a time when Our Lady cried for the people of Poland. The scars on the painting come from enemy soldiers who tried to destroy the icon. These scars are reproduced on all copies of the icon from the smallest to the greatest. The tradition says that it was painted by Saint Luke.



Our Lady of Czestochowa.

One other place that I feel needs a mention is the city of Kraków which was once the capital of Poland and today is a busy tourist centre. Kraków is like any other Polish city, full of churches, convents and places to buy vodka! But its ambience has changed even in the last few years and has become rather too geared towards the tourist, leaving behind some of its native pleasures. One place that is a must for any visitor is the Church dedicated to Our Lady in the main town square. It is a place that encourages much devotion to Our Lady as she is one of the chief patrons of Poland. The reredos of the altar which opens out at twelve noon each day to the accompaniment of the singing of a Marian anthem is one of the main attractions of the day. Many people gather in the church to marvel at the great work of art depicting the major points of the life of Christ and of Mary his mother.

At the same time of the day one can go outside of the church and watch a man, standing on top of the bell tower, dressed in the attire of a medieval herald playing his trumpet to signal the attack on Poland that was made by the Russians during the Middle Ages. The trumpeter never finishes because tradition tells us that the original trumpeter was killed while he was still playing. The only problem that this can cause is the fact that one can't be inside the church looking at the altar and outside listening to the trumpeter at the same time, unless of

course you are staying there for more than one day. We decided that we would stay in the church to watch the solemn opening of the reredos. It was well worth it and even though I had seen it many times before I was still very impressed by all the colour and the intricate art work.

Perhaps the only other places that are worth a mention are the "Rynek Główny" which is the market across from the church in the main square. This market deals only in traditional Polish memorabilia and little items that one can buy to remember a visit to Poland. For the first time there my mother failed to be impressed since she thought that all the things had become so expensive due to the whole- city pandering to the onset of tourism. It didn't stop us from spending more than enough time there criticising the prices and lamenting on how cheap everything used to be. My family tried to convince us that they thought that things were better under communism.

The Cathedral and the castle of the kings is found in the one place at the top of a very steep hill which was very difficult to climb after lunch, but we made the valiant effort. The Cathedral is more like a museum to the past but still has regular worship there. The castles are something that I have never visited but am told that I haven't missed much by not doing so. A climb up the bell tower is very rewarding as one can get a wonderful view of the surrounding area. The younger ones among us did that while the less young did something else - something which didn't involve climbing anything. It really was a very hot day when we visited Kraków. And so after the visit to the Cathedral and a few other churches that I wanted to see we headed off for home.

I don't think that I should bore you with the details of the rest of my holiday as it was all centred around being with my family and enjoying their company. I feel that once in a while it is good for me to come into contact with the source of my life or at least part of it. It is good to touch and feel the real Poland as it comes to terms with the new freedom that they have gained. They seem to be coping on the whole, even if the Church seems to enjoy the new found freedom a bit too much. I feel though that things will soon sort themselves out.

One thing that I am proud of is my Polish background. It has taught me a lot and even though I experienced it in the environs of the Polish centre in Birmingham I still feel that I picked up the essentials. I think that these include a sense of community and trust founded on a trust in God. But the Poles in England can, to a certain extent, be accused of living a life as it was in Poland, rather than as it is. They still, however, show the virtues of the Polish race which I think is loyalty to the cause whatever that may be.

UNRAVELLING THE WEB OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Rt. Rev. Mgr. Michael Keegan

Mgr. Keegan, former Theology tutor in College (1985-1991), and an experienced catechist, demonstrates the deficiencies of the current approach to teaching religion in Catholic Secondary Schools, and proposes a new vision for a specifically Catholic Religious Education.



Mgr. Keegan in his days as College Theology Prof.

At a small symposium held at the College towards the end of June 1994, the interaction between *kerygma* and faith and the dependence of fruitful teaching upon that interaction, were discussed. The following recounts my own position consequent on those discussions.

The Synoptic Gospels proclaim Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They lay before us the circumstances of his birth; his family life and teaching; the signs he worked; his sufferings and death; and, finally, the account of his risen appearances and ascension. They also illustrate the variety of reaction to his person, his teachings and the signs, among those with whom he lived and worked.

It seems to me that one overall purpose guiding his preaching and signs, is to invite belief in himself. He asks that others follow him, listen to him and accept what he says. Why? Because he is who he is. They are to judge that he is worthy of such belief by the experience of his person and by taking account of all that he says and does. Moreover, a time comes for choosing. He himself precipitates such a choice at Caesarea Philippi. In St. John's Gospel it arises as a result of the teaching at Capernaum that all must eat of his flesh and drink of his blood if they are to have life in him.

The choice to believe or to refuse belief is personal and immediate. Each person must make the choice for themselves. The act of belief is an act whereby a person freely accepts the Person, Jesus, as Lord. It grounds a new relationship and introduces the believer to a radical view of the meaning and purpose of the world and of human living. Living in acceptance of the new relationship with Christ (and through Christ with the Father in the Spirit) involves a person in a journey of faith which slowly transforms the way in which life is understood and lived. The extent to which the belief is wholehearted will govern the unfolding of the life in Christ. Hesitations, compromises, refusals, will all tend to mar the transformation which is the working of the Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit is at work is, of course, a conviction dependent upon the basic acceptance of Jesus as Lord.

The response of faith in Jesus includes, ultimately, an acceptance of all the elements which the followers and, therefore, believers in Jesus, proclaimed as pertaining to his significance. A summary of these elements is given by St. Luke in his account of St. Peter's address to the household of Cornelius, in the tenth chapter of Acts. "It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ -but Jesus is Lord of all men. You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people, but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses - we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead - and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name."

Up to this point the response of faith has visualised the circumstances of people directly in contact with our Lord himself, during his time on earth. Now, however, a new element appears in the circumstances of his proclamation of himself as Lord. Those directly involved with him in the unfolding of his life; at his death; and who are witnesses to his resurrection, become his proclaimers. They embody the *kerygma*. They claim that he has ordered them to proclaim him to his

people. To accept Jesus as Lord in the context of their proclamation now involves joining their company and dependence upon their witness. Although the response of faith in Jesus, in the context of that witness, is still the personal responsibility of each individual, the response of faith now includes the individual in the faith of the assembly of believers. It is belief in the faith of the Church and it includes belief in the Church as the authentic proclaimer of Christ. That Church will necessarily be structured in such a way as to preserve the distinction between proclamation and faith response. Faith always remains a response to Jesus in his Church and it necessarily depends upon the continuing presence of the *kerygma*. This, it seems to me, is true, not only with regard to the work of proclaiming Christ to unbelievers, but also the continuing work of proclaiming Christ to believers within the Church, so that they can continue to grow in Him. The history of the Church through the ages amply confirms this view.

Returning to the circumstances of those who were in direct contact with our Lord in his life on earth, it seems to me that their willingness to listen to his teaching, to his *didache*, depended upon an initial willingness to be open to accepting him as authentic. That initial acceptance of him then had to contend with the content of his teaching; the reading of the signs he worked; and the experience of his person. The ferment of that contending involved a person in an ultimate choice. The "yes" of faith or the "no" of rejection. Ultimately, "sitting on the fence" is not a viable option. Persistence in such a stance, becomes, in the face of the insistence of the *kerygma*, the "Who do you say that I am?", rejection. Rejection of Jesus as Lord, therefore, means rejection of his teaching as a constituent of faith in him. Belief in him involves belief in his teaching because it is his teaching. Consequently, his followers, whom he ordered to proclaim him to his people, are bound to present his *didache* as to be included in the faith of those who accept Jesus as Lord. It is an integral part of the faith of his Church.

The above outlines my position in regard to the relationship between *kerygma* and the response of faith and the consequent dependence of *didache* on wholehearted belief in Jesus in the midst of his Church. Moreover, it seems to me that this set of relationships is, itself, part of the *didache*. They are part of the revelation accomplished in Jesus, our Lord. They are of perennial significance for the life of the Church. They are to be respected in the journey of faith of each individual. They are a determinant in the pastoral practice of the church. I now consider two applications in illustration of this.

One very significant pastoral duty of the Church's ministers is the baptising of new members. When an adult requests baptism their personal response of faith can be determined by the way they live, whether it is in accordance with what they profess to believe. With an infant no such scrutiny is possible. Canon 868 says:

'§1 For an infant to be baptised lawfully it is required:

1. that the parents, or at least one of them, or the person who lawfully holds their place, give their consent;

2. that there be a well founded hope that the child will be brought up in the catholic religion. If such hope is truly lacking, the baptism is, in accordance with the provisions of particular law, to be deferred and the parents advised of the reason for this.

It is my contention that the nature of the interaction between *kerygma*, faith and *didache* suggests that the deferral of baptism should be taken in all seriousness. That is to say, baptism should be deferred until there is, indeed, a well founded hope that the child will be brought up in the catholic religion. Usually this will depend upon a genuine conversion to substantial practice of the faith on the part of at least one parent. It seems to me that present pastoral endeavours should not accept anything less.

A second application regards the situation in many of our Secondary Schools. In the religious lesson the Catholic teacher is often faced with a group of students among whom only a minority, sometimes only a small minority, can be said to be living the Catholic faith. The circumstances are such that treating the situation as a missionary situation is not possible. The teacher cannot proclaim the *kerygma*, wait upon the response of faith and proceed to unfold the *didache*. Such a procedure would introduce divisions which would be destructive of school order. What to do?

One solution is to endeavour to give the students an appreciation of the religious dimension of human living with an emphasis on Christian religious living but without insisting on the *kerygma*. On page 11 of the Teacher's Book for "Weaving the Web", a modular programme of Religious Education, Principle 3 of the principles which underpin "Weaving the Web", states: "Religious education is not *primarily* concerned with maturing and developing Christian faith. Its aim is to help people to be aware of and appreciate the religious dimension of life and the way this has been expressed in religious traditions." This is evidently the solution of this programme and David Konstant, in his foreword, says "Teachers in Catholic schools will quickly recognise the value of this approach."

It seems to me that the authors of this programme implicitly recognise the impossibility of ignoring the interaction of *kerygma*, faith and *didache* in the teaching of the Catholic faith.

Their solution is to bypass the problems that arise and to attempt a general appreciation of the religious dimension in human living with special consideration of the Christian tradition. Not the Catholic tradition, because a key element in that tradition is truth given by God which is to be believed and to which a person must adhere and by which they must live. Is another approach possible?

I suggest that it would be possible to draw up a programme of religious education for the teaching of the Catholic tradition in the religious lesson in such a way that the *kerygma* and the *didache* are presented while prescinding from the response of faith. This is what happened; this is what Christ taught; this is how the Church understood his teaching; and this is how and why it has been elaborated to its present form in the documents of Vatican II. This is an account of

the Catholic tradition according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. It would be important that the teacher, teaching such a curriculum, should be a believer and able to teach with conviction. It goes without saying that they would also need a competent grasp of their subject. However, their responsibility is to bring their students to a knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition. They would be in no way responsible, in the religion class, for the faith of the students under their charge. Let the truth of the revelation speak for itself. Any response of faith is to be referred to the community of faith to which the student belongs. That is to say the parish in which they reside. This is not to suggest that the Catholic school, as a whole, has no Catholic pastoral responsibility for its students and that the ethos of the school should not be positively Catholic. The recommendation is concerned with the religion class and the task of the religion teacher in that environment. I suggest it as a viable alternative to the policy of "Weaving the Web". I would also maintain that it is more in keeping with the whole endeavour of the Catholic community to provide a Catholic secondary education for its children.



A scene from last year's Christmas party.



The Viana 'jota' group perform at the Christmas party in the College refectory.



The Kings come but once a year. Ramón blacks up to distribute gifts.



Holy Week begins out in the Patio.



Street wise: No solemn liturgy would be the same without meeting the man in the street.



Diaconate Ordination: The Elevation



*The Examination of the
Candidates.*

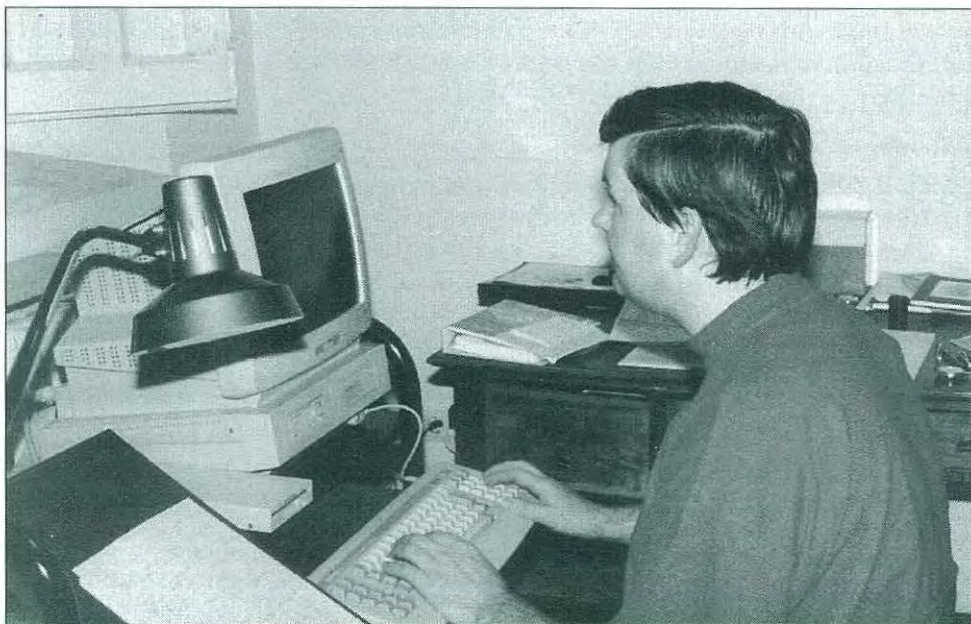


The Prostration.

THE COMMUNITY OF THE FAITHFUL

Fr. Charles Neal

One of the Second Vatican Council's greatest achievements was the great advance in the understanding of the Church. Here Fr. Charles Neal of Hallam Diocese, and Old Boy of the College, shares some of the insights which can be gained from the 1983 Code of Canon Law about that most basic of units of the Church, the Parish.



Fr. Charles hard at work on his Licence tesina.

For most of us, for the vast majority of Catholics, the link with the Church is established and maintained through the local parish community. Indeed for most priests it is in the parochial ministry that they scratch out their priesthood. It may surprise people to discover that the parish system is not merely a useful way of organising things within a diocese but it is mandatory in all dioceses throughout the world:

'Each diocese or other particular Church is to be divided into distinct parts or parishes.' (c 274 §1)

Clearly the parish is important on a personal level. It is our contact with the Church, and it is important on a juridical and formal level. But what exactly is a parish? How can the same structure be applied to a variety of different social and

cultural situations? Within the Church in England and Wales parishes vary immensely. If we look further afield into Europe there is even greater variety, not to mention parishes in South America, Africa, the Far East, and so on. So what is it that makes a parish a parish? What is the fundamental idea which infuses the lived reality of people in vastly different circumstances throughout the world.

The historical origins of the parish are found in the rural communities of Christians who were unable to join the principal city celebrations of the Lord's Day. To these communities an elder (*presbyter*) was sent to preside in the place of the local bishop. At the Council of Trent, the Council Fathers recognised the importance of the parish structure which was now more or less established as a territorial division of the diocese under the presidency of a priest. Under the juridical order of the Code of Canon Law of 1917 the parish was defined as a territorial division of a diocese with its own priest, church and population (c 216 §1). Whilst the image of the original rural community is still more or less recognisable it is clearly a very dry definition which seems more concerned with administrative neatness than the reality of parish life. The territorial division and boundary of the parish was strictly applied.

The overall impression of the parish is seen very much from the priest's point of view, from his tasks, his rights and obligations, his jurisdiction, and the parish as an administrative district of the local Church. The ministry of the priest in relation to the people was often lost sight of. Such a concept could not be justified by the sense of *communio* which was rediscovered and emphasised as being the very heart of the reality of the Church by the Second Vatican Council. The ecclesiological emphasis of the Council necessarily required a new look at the role of Canon Law in the Church, the concepts enshrined in law and its application in everyday life.

Although the Council did not specifically discuss the nature and role of the parish or parish priests and community, it was clearly never very far from the minds of the Fathers. References appear in various documents and even when there is no explicit mention the consequences of what is said has clear implications at the level of parish life.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, places the parish clearly in the liturgical context and echoes the historical origins of the parish:

'But as it is impossible for the bishop always and everywhere to preside over his flock in his Church, he must of necessity establish groupings of the faithful; and among these, parishes, set up locally under a pastor who takes the place of the bishop, are the most important, for in some way they represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world.'

So the parish is in a special way the gathering of the local liturgical assembly presided over by the presbyter who represents the bishop, and in some way represents the visible Church.

The document which lays out the ecclesiological thrust of the Council is the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, which develops the concept of the Church as *communio*, as a pilgrim people, as a community of the followers of Christ. All the baptised are members of the Church and members of the community. Indeed it is only within the context of *communio* that any function or ministry can have meaning. Bishops, priests, deacons and religious are first and foremost baptised members of the community. It is within this communal context that the document develops the idea of the structured or hierarchical aspect of the Church.

In the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, the nature and role of priests and particularly of parish priests is unfolded. The priest is seen primarily as a collaborator in the exercise of the pastoral ministry of the Diocesan Bishop. The identity of the priest and especially of the parish priest, is intimately tied into the nature of the episcopal ministry and his function within the community (*Lumen Gentium* 30).

The exclusive nature of the territorial boundary was discussed and challenged during the Council. Whilst it is retained and used to determine the extent of the parish, the strictly exclusive nature of the territory is lessened. If the people of a specific territory are to be considered as a community then it is right that the Church protects the community by encouraging the people to live their Christian life within their proper community. However, this limit should never be such as to restrict the people from celebrating elsewhere or the priest from being able to exercise his ministry beyond the territorial boundary.

The Code of 1983 retains the territorial principle, which it interprets as "embracing all Christ's faithful of a given territory" (c 516). It defines more the outreach of the parish, defines the limits of the specific responsibilities of the priests attached to the parish rather than aiming at limiting people's freedom. Many do criticise the territorial principle as being too rigid and too static. In my view, however, it would be dangerous to remove the principle completely. There are too many marginalised members of the urban society. This principle at least ensures that the vast majority of people do belong to one community or another, however tenuous such belonging may be:

In canon 515 §1 the Code gives us the fundamental definition of the parish:

'A parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of a Diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.'

Everything that is said about parishes in the Code is to be understood in the context of this statement.

The first fundamental element that we are given is that of the 'community'. This term was not easily arrived at. In the first two drafts of the revised Code, the canon referred to the parish as a 'portion' of the faithful rather than as a community. This latter term was used because it was felt that the term

'community' reflected a more dynamic reality and emphasises the nature of the parish as relationship.

The term 'community' is in some ways ambiguous in that it is used in many different ways in many different circumstances. However it is clear that in some way it reflects a dynamic structure of relationship and interrelations between a group of people united in one way or another. There is always at some fundamental level a basic equality among members of a community.

The parish community is defined as a community of 'the faithful'. That is "those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the People of God" (c 204 §1). It is the community of all the baptised, and those who, while not baptised, seek admission, that is catechumens, since they "are linked with the Church in a special way" (c 206 §1).

It is interesting to note that in the widest sense this does seem to imply that baptised non-Catholics are also members of the parish community. However because they are not in full communion with the Church they are not bound to the Church under ecclesiastical governance (cc 11, 96, 205). There remains however a special relationship among all the baptised and this must be expressed at parochial level.

This community of the faithful is 'stably established within a particular Church' (c 515 §1). So a parish is never an isolated community; it is within a structure which includes other figures similar to itself and, in a hierarchical sense, is within the structure of the Diocese or other 'particular Church' (c 368). The Second Vatican Council referred to the parish as a kind of 'cell' of the Diocese (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 10). This indicates the idea of that basic element which gives life to the wider community, it is an entity in its own right but is both dependent and interdependent. The parish is not merely a useful division of the Diocese, nor is the Diocese merely a collection of parishes.

The community within the particular Church is both 'established' and 'stable'. This means that it is not merely an accidental event, the forming of a parish. Whilst the process may grow out of natural development, it involves a specific act of the authority of the Church. Nor is the parish a temporary measure. It is stable and permanent. No one ever knows the future and we know that often parishes need to be closed or moved or significantly altered. However, in principle, when it is established it is established permanently. If the community is for some reason unable to be permanently established then the Diocesan Bishop will look to other possibilities for seeing to the pastoral care of the faithful (c 516).

The other principle element which is contained in the Code's definition of a parish is that the pastoral care of the parish 'is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor'. The community requires leadership, the liturgical community requires presidency and the Christian community requires priestly ministry. The parish priest is the 'proper pastor', that is he stands as shepherd of the people in his own right, he does not merely represent someone else. He acts 'under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop' but he is more than merely a representative of

the Bishop. The parish priest has a specific role and duty which comes with the fact of being appointed to the parish.

The teaching of the Council about the relationship between the Bishop and his priests and the collaboration required in priestly ministry is summarised in canon 519. The parish priest shares in the ministry of the Bishop and carries out the office of teaching, sanctifying and ruling for the community entrusted to him. He does not do this alone and in isolation, however, rather it is done with the cooperation of other priests and deacons and with the aid of the lay members of Christ's faithful.

Many of the laws referring to the parish deal with the role and ministry, the rights and obligations of parish priests. It is easy to slip into old habits and read these as though the parish were simply about the priest and his job. However the whole layout of the Code, the structure of Book II, the thrust of the ecclesiology of Vatican II and the definition of the parish itself demand that we interpret all that is said within the context of the parish as a community. We cannot look at the duties of the parish priest as separate from the community. If he has a specific task then it reflects the nature and mission of the whole community.

To get a kind of global view of what the Code expects of the parish, therefore, it is worth looking briefly at what it lays down as the principal tasks of the parish priest.

Firstly, at the heart of parochial life is the Word of God which is to be "proclaimed in its entirety to those living in the parish". The parish "fosters works which promote the spirit of the Gospel, including its relevance to social justice". This overflows into a special concern for the education of children and young people. Similarly there is to be a missionary impetus arising from the Word; there is to be special effort to ensure that the Gospel message is brought to those who have given up religious practice and those who do not profess the true faith. Also at the centre of the parish is the blessed Eucharist which forms the parish assembly. The faithful, the parish, are to be nourished by the devout celebration of the sacraments. The Word and the Sacraments take on their true meaning and effectiveness in the overflow into the daily life of prayer which is encouraged at a community level, a family level and an individual level. All are to be encouraged to take an active part in the celebration of the liturgy.

The parish priest is particularly encouraged to know the people of the parish. He is to share in their cares and anxieties and offer comfort in their sorrow. He has special care for the sick and the dying and also for the poor, the lonely, the exiled and others burdened with special difficulties. He is to foster the growth of Christian life within the families of the parish. The parish community should reflect a similar concern; it should reach out and embrace all in the locality.

The parish should "recognise and promote the specific role which the lay members of Christ's faithful have in the mission of the Church" and they are to be "concerned for the community of the parish, that they feel themselves to be members both of the Diocese and of the Universal Church, and that they take part and sustain works which promote this community." (c 529 §2).

We are therefore given in the Code a very dynamic and adaptable vision of the parish. In this short article we have hardly scratched the surface. However I hope to have given at least some food for thought. It is, after all, so easy to take for granted that with which we are familiar, even if it is of vital importance. The way in which this vision is applied will always vary tremendously, and yet all are striving to make the parish a true community where the Word of God and the Sacraments are at the centre of community and individual life which overflows into the daily lives of all the members of the community.

The parish mission reflects in on itself and also outwards to others. Perhaps the most profound description of the parish is that given on various occasions by Pope John Paul II when he refers to the parish as "the place of communion". Such a place as we all need and which so many in our society are desperately searching for.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF A COMMUNITY

Christopher Parsons

Community life is one of give and take and is never an easy experience. Chris Parsons, first year student, here reflects on the things that he not only gave but also received during a year living with the L'Arche community in Brecon.

L'Arche is an international federation of care communities, dedicated to the living of everyday life in the spirit of Christ's Beatitudes. It began in 1964 when Jean Vanier and Father Thomas Philippe, in response to a perceived call from God, invited two men with learning difficulties to leave the institution in which they were forced to live, and come and share their life of basic Christian community living.

From this first community, founded in a village in France and in the Roman Catholic tradition, many other communities have developed around the world, in various cultural and religious traditions. However, these communities, called into being by God, are all united by the same spirit of welcome, of sharing and simplicity. There are now around 100 communities, spread across five continents,



The Mother House of L'Arche, Brecon.

including seven in Great Britain, and many of the communities are made up of more than one household, mixed in amongst the local town community. In addition to this, most communities also run their own workshops and businesses so as to be able to provide the community members with challenging and satisfying occupations, that will encourage their natural skills and abilities to grow along with a true sense of fulfilment. Often these workshops are open to members of the wider local community who feel that they wish to be a part of the distinctive style of work that L'Arche has to offer.

I spent almost a year living and working in the L'Arche community in Brecon, Mid Wales. It is one of the youngest communities in Britain, and when I joined, it consisted of one house, offering domestic life for eleven people, and a candle workshop based at the local adult training centre. I must confess that up to three months prior to being invited by the community to join them, I had never heard of L'Arche, and it took me a fair bit of research to be able to get a clear understanding of exactly what it is. I wanted to be able to pigeon-hole them, as some of you are possibly trying to do now. First of all, what is their primary identity? Are they 'religious' communities? Is L'Arche a business, a charity, a sect, an institutional 'home'? It's difficult to say at times, even for those people who come into contact with them in their natural environments.

Primarily, a L'Arche community is a *care* community, which increasingly these days is listed as a funded option by the Social Services for an adult with a learning difficulty who desires a different way of life. In contrast to most traditional 'care' organisations, in L'Arche the distinction between the carer and the cared-for is blurred. Although the titles 'resident' and 'assistant' are used, they are misleading since in general the assistants reside, and the residents assist. There are no uniforms or ranks, but as with any enduring human structure, it is necessary that some people are willing to serve in positions of responsibility. And along with the recognition of the social services and the trust of a resident and their guardian of course comes the need for accountability.

L'Arche is a registered charity, and first year assistants are technically volunteers with a small stipend. I was still able to buy the occasional compact disk and maintain my rundown battered car, although mysteriously I didn't appear to have any savings left at the end of it... As I mentioned before, various communities also get different forms of social services funding, which these days is aimed towards encouraging the style of 'care in the community' that L'Arche aims for.

But in addition to this, L'Arche does have an undeniable spiritual ethos and an overt religious presence in the town community. In Brecon there is a pivotal daily prayer gathering designed to reunite the community together in the embrace of Christ at the end of each person's separate working day. And although the communities are open to people of all religious persuasions or none, it is still expected that all community members should share the overall L'Arche Christian vision proclaiming the fundamental equality and dignity of all human beings in the sight of God.

This is the great difference in L'Arche as a professional care organisation. Because this Christian vision of equality and shared vulnerability with Christ, means that its aim is to achieve genuine interdependent relationships on a physical, emotional and spiritual level. And this means facing and sharing all the pains and sorrows of Christian relationship as well as its joys. This would be avoided in a traditional institution. The carer would tend to avoid becoming emotionally involved with the 'clients' or demonstrating their own weaknesses, fears and limitations. In L'Arche, as residents are being helped to cope more strongly with the dangerous and unfeeling society around them, the assistants are often going on a reverse journey, learning to dismantle the strong façades that society forced them to erect at an early age. And it is the person with the learning difficulty who will often hold the key to this unravelling. For although the majority of society might judge them as having very little to offer in intellectual or physical terms, their 'gifts of the heart' will often prove as deep and beautiful as those of any more sophisticated person. And of course these gifts will often be much more accessible and spontaneous than in the more 'worldly wise'. Essentially, it was these acts of the heart that Christ was asking us for, what for him makes us true sons and daughters of God. Not intellectual feats or great physical achievements. The Beatitudes show the person with the learning difficulty, as with so many people pushed to the fringes of society, to hold a very important sign as to the route that society as a whole must take if it is ever to become truly Christian and truly human.

It all sounds very magical and perfect so far, but is it too good to be true? Very early on Jean Vanier realised that L'Arche could never be a solution in itself to the plight of the world's rejected. L'Arche has continued to confine its dedication to helping adults whose primary restriction is a learning difficulty, rather than a physical disability or mental health problem. Very often of course, these different aspects go hand in hand, and many people in L'Arche have physical restrictions ranging from minor problems with coordination to an inability to walk or eat unaided. Also, being institutionalised for a long period, or the inability of some parents or society in general to be able to provide sufficiently for the special needs of their disabled child can occasionally leave a range of emotional problems that are quite separate from their initial handicap. A person with a learning difficulty is more likely to be abused than one without, and their disability can make the hurts much more difficult to heal.

But despite the practical limitations of L'Arche as a solution in itself to the deep fracture of society, the communities can nevertheless be a *sign* to the world that a solution is possible. And not a solution that lies within any large modern political creed, but one that comes from the most basic of Christian teachings. The solution to society's problems still remains within the ordinary family homes, workplaces and everyday interactions of humanity.

Enough of the theory, what about my personal experience of this golden utopia? I was in need of a L'Arche style experience to contrast with my previous lifestyle and bring me back to earth again. I had left my career with a view to pursuing a perceived call to the priesthood, and I needed some way of clarifying my motivations. It is very easy simply to say that it's God's will and, well, that's

that. But I needed more evidence to feel more comfortable with the source of my vocation. And my Vocations Director similarly felt that I needed more time between "the hands of 'Mother Air Force' and the hands of 'Mother Church' " to see what I might regress to if I was free of formative pressures and could just be me for a change. Very wise man... (I can say that now he is no longer in the position). He asked me to find out more about L'Arche and see what I thought.

I read a biography about Jean Vanier and L'Arche and was immediately struck by his own experience of giving up a forces commission in order to follow a call to the priesthood. He never actually got there, but instead found himself called to the founding of L'Arche as a lay man. This raised questions within me about the eventual direction of my own journey, and I approached L'Arche with as open a mind as I could muster. A visit to the Brecon community confirmed to me that I desperately wanted and needed to go to L'Arche. Looking back on that first visit, I think that the Brecon community were very generous and brave to take me on. L'Arche get many people wanting to come for just one year so as to extract as much 'experience' as possible, and at the end of the day their primary role is not as a pre-seminary training ground, or as an all-welcoming host for people just wanting "a year out doing good deeds". The communities need people who also have a long term vision of building and accompanying the community through many years of change, and there are a small number of remarkable people who eventually make lifelong 'covenants' with their community.

But, nevertheless, the communities do get nourished by naive, insensitive bulls like me, and the great variety of persons that live in the communities is a credit to what a true sign of Christian 'oneness' it is. I think my main weakness on arriving was my poor understanding of the significance of this everyday word *community*. It never occurred to me that I could be challenged just as much by living with the assistants as by living with the residents. Real community life is never easy in any circumstance. More importantly for me, I wasn't ready for the difficulties that other people can have living with me! In the RAF people wear their egos on their arms, and brash banter is the name of the game. I wasn't prepared for highly intelligent ordinary people, without learning difficulties, who are also *sensitive*. I'm even gradually beginning to realise just how sensitive I am as well. Revelation! I'm human.

I went to L'Arche wanting to be challenged by helping to 'carry' people. It's a much bigger challenge for someone like me who values my skills and autonomy so much to allow someone else to carry *me*. An unsettled childhood has given me a particularly strong resistance to being dependent. Also, despite my awareness and belief in the equality of all the members of the community, there was always a part of me that didn't *want* to believe it. There is a strong desire within me to rely on the talents and skills that I know I possess in order to *justify* God's love for me. I want tangible reasons for being very special in God's eyes, and I wouldn't readily give up my intellectual and physical skills so as to open up and just rely on my 'gifts of the heart'. But at least I can admit that now, and I certainly couldn't have done so before I went to L'Arche.



Chris ... on the fiddle.

Aside from gaining an awareness of the reality of the Beatitudes, the other great spiritual tool that I believe I learned is the "sacrament of the present moment". For me as only a first year assistant, boredom wasn't a great problem since there was much to learn and experience. But for most of the residents and longer term assistants, there aren't always exciting new plans around the corner. It's easy to find God in past glories or hopes for the future. But can you find him here and now whilst reading this article, and at every moment of today's routine? People often see God in great mountains, beautiful gardens and impressive preachers, but can you find him in drab townscapes, busy kitchens and your next door neighbour? This aspect of life would have been much more demanding for me had I stayed for a second year, but I think I picked up the basic technique of just rejoicing in being alive, and it's something that can be practised anywhere.

Perhaps the most important development for me now is a determination to live relationship much more deeply than ever before. This might come as a bit of a revelation to some of my fellow students here! But my closest friends are now much closer than ever before, and they actually challenge me as well as just patting me on the back. The tension between exclusive and non-exclusive community relationships has also provided some very important lessons for me. I think that I might be developing a 'dedication to reality', and this seems to me the most interesting thing about the L'Arche vision, that through a strong dedication to the basic essentials and realities of life, the idealism actually bears fruits.

L'Arche is just over thirty years old now and spread across the world. It seems to me a very mature and exceedingly self-aware organisation considering

that. It has had its problems in trying to grow too quickly, but has learned from this very well and appears focused now on the long term. The sense of the L'Arche family extending across the world seems to work as well. Intercommunion comes very easily to communities who meet up from different countries. Ecumenism is obviously a prevalent issue, and L'Arche doesn't ignore the problems involved, either by pretending there are no problems, or by assuming that they can't be solved. As well as being a sign of Christian unity, L'Arche is also a sign of the great pain that there can be in living intimately with Christian division.

There is a strange dichotomy in the reality of L'Arche. On the one hand it is all about living simple everyday life, buried invisibly in ordinary society, helping the rejected to be seen and feel as normal as anyone else. And yet on the other hand it wants everybody to see just how different it is. People want to showcase it. Many people want to visit the communities and spectate, and people in distant countries write magazine articles about them. Because of this strange tension; I have avoided mentioning here individual people and experiences. My desire to write about all the great things that happened to me infringes upon the very personal and private lives of others, whose permission and opinions I haven't sought. But if L'Arche is to be a sign from God to society, it does need to be visible. And *translatable*. It is relatively easy to live intimate Christian community with the downtrodden of society when you are living in a L'Arche community. Similarly it's easier to live a full life of Christian spirituality and service to others if you are a priest. But very few people will ever be priests or religious, or live in a L'Arche community. There are ordinary jobs to be done, and ordinary lives to be led in the thick of the material world.

L'Arche gave me a vision for priesthood. But even in a small Christian community like St. Albans, I have found it very difficult to put it into practice. The community life here is a means to an end further down the line rather than an end in itself. And people wouldn't be here training for the priesthood unless they were capable of living a life of independence and autonomy. The downtrodden of society are not very visible here, and I don't easily suffer fools gladly unless I can label them as downtrodden. For me the challenge of L'Arche didn't stop when I left there. It simply got a lot harder.

A SPIRITUAL YEAR

Fr. John Armitage

One of the issues discussed by the Vocations Directors at their annual Conference, held last year in College, was the lack of basic Christian formation of many candidates applying to Dioceses for entry to seminaries. Fr. John Armitage, Vocations Director for the Diocese of Brentwood, presents his vision for a 'spiritual year' of preparation for priestly formation, based on a paper presented to the Conference.

The Aim of the Pre-Seminary Year

The aim of the Pre-Seminary Year is to provide a community environment in which candidates for the priesthood can receive a spiritual-human development so that they are fully rooted in their faith in Christ and are prepared for their seminary formation. In Mk 1. 35-39 we read that the Lord in the morning long before dawn got up and left the house and prayed before going to proclaim the Gospel. The Pre-Seminary Year is to provide that similar process of preparation of forming ministers ready to undertake the New Evangelization, spoken of in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, which requires 'a new fervour, new methods and a new expression for the announcing and witnessing of the Gospel' (PDV 18).

The Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2.42-47) speaks of the early Christian community, a model for all Christian communities, and in the Pre-Seminary Year it is essential that the Year be a community experience, entailing a certain withdrawal from the world so that students can truly meet the Lord in a personal intimacy with him: 'Apart from me you can do nothing' (Jn 15.5). They can then identify with the Lord and his mission which includes being one with each other (Jn 17.21); 'a relationship of deep communion and friendship with himself' (PDV 42). The distinctive nature of the pastoral, diocesan, ministerial priesthood is not monastic but, in order to be authentically Christian, has a community dimension.

Absolutely vital to the Year is the spiritual dimension. The priesthood is not based on human wisdom but on the power of God and on a close personal following of the Lord. The spiritual Year is to promote the student's personal life in the Lord achieved by being introduced to a personal life of prayer; an introduction to the Word of God as the Living Word; an introduction to the Liturgy and the Paschal Mystery; regular (preferably weekly) spiritual direction; retreats and days of recollection.

Linked to the spiritual formation is an introduction to catechesis, the *mysterium Christi*. The unevenness of Catholic education leaves many unsure or ignorant of the faith.

Central to the diocesan priesthood is pastoral work and work with the poor. "Preparation for the priesthood must necessarily involve a proper training in charity and particularly in the preferential love for the poor in whom our faith discovers Jesus." (PDV 49). So the Year would include weekly opportunities for pastoral work, particularly in parishes, and for one month, an intensive period of working with the poor and disadvantaged.

Underpinning the above there would have to be a programme of human development based on the initial psychological assessment of each student. Both individual personal and group work form important parts to the human development programme. "It is important that the priest should mould his personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ." (PDV 43). Students need to have an affective maturity and have the capacity to relate to others. This is important in considering celibacy, where the student needs to have a sufficient degree of psychological and sexual maturity so that celibacy is freely undertaken based on the example of Christ himself.

The Context of and Need for the Pre-Seminary Year

Candidates need time to discern their vocations for themselves and to make their decision mature, "to discern the authenticity of their call from God and to respond to it generously" (PDV 2). This is not the discernment of the vocation but a deepening of the call to follow Christ. This is particularly true because of the other factors which this paragraph of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* pick out, and which we shall briefly examine.

Many candidates come from a dysfunctional background, for example divorced or single parents or a background of abuse. Deep-seated emotional problems must be addressed as soon as possible, because if not these can cause greater problems in seminary formation or during ordained ministry.

Other candidates need a "conversion experience" from the dominant secular culture of the world to the Church's culture of life. This is particularly necessary where the candidate's lifestyle has not been Christian, in particular in relation to attitudes to money and relationships, especially a distortion of the true meaning of sexuality (PDV 7). In such candidates a self-centred set of values can be predominant, and this has to be overcome if personal Christian growth is to be possible.

Some students may belong to a particular "school" of the Church which, although good in itself, may be rather narrow with only a partial appreciation of the richness of the Catholic spiritual tradition. Such narrowness is common in candidates who have had a charismatic experience, or who have been attracted by a rigid traditionalism. This can also be true in the case of recent converts. While, for many, their background includes a powerful thirst for justice and peace, a care for creation, or a commitment to international solidarity, this may not always have been linked to faith in Jesus Christ.

Other candidates may not have a structured prayer life and spirituality. Their spiritual background is diffuse and fragile and in particular there is often a misunderstanding concerning the nature of the ministerial priesthood.

It is unrealistic to expect seminaries to provide the specific requirements of the pre-seminary year. The role of the seminary and of other pre-seminary institutions, such as Campion House, is quite different. Each section of formation is necessary and thus the pre-seminary year cannot replace the work currently done by Vocations Directors, Selection Conferences, or the work done at Campion House.

The objection that the pre-seminary year lengthens formation can be answered by the belief that it will be a long-term saving, in that those who do enter seminary will be more sure of their vocation, and have something on which to build. In the Church of today it can be said that the sacred is in crisis and that the image of the priesthood is blurred. Vocations are fewer than before and there are numerous cases of recently ordained priests leaving the active ministry. This may be because of a spirituality which did not involve embracing the Cross, and consequently a lack of conversion at a deep level. This reinforces the need to strengthen the foundation of the future priest's spiritual life. He faces new challenges in the priesthood and he has the right to expect from the Church all the means to help him to live out that priesthood. The first year of formation is a crucial stage for laying a foundation for future priestly life.



All smiles in the Sacristy after this year's Diaconate Ordination.



The Three Degrees ... the Señora with Lauren and Pili.

A NEW AGE DAWNING?

Kathy Walsh

The so-called New Age Movement is becoming more and more an everyday part of life as it moves into mainstream culture. One only has to walk down the High Street to see evidence of this. Kathy Walsh of INFORM, an information exchange organisation interested in New Religious Movements, recently gave a series of talks in College on this theme. Here she tries to answer the question of what our response should be as Christians and Catholics.

Background to the New Age Movement

'New Age' is an umbrella term used to cover many diverse and sometimes conflicting ideas and activities. Although used since the last century, it was with the counter-culture of the late 1960s that the term entered the popular imagination, and hopes for "the dawning of the age of Aquarius" began to manifest themselves in what came to be called the New Age Movement.

The New Age Movement uses ideas and practices from Eastern religions and philosophies, but it is also firmly rooted in the spiritualist, occult, metaphysical, and magic traditions of the West. In this sense it is relativist and syncretist in its approach to 'Truth'. It draws too upon insights from quantum physics and the new mathematics to Jungian-analysis and postmodern philosophy. New Age concerns often overlap with, but are not reducible to, such current social concerns as the peace, ecology, feminist, 'human potential' and natural health movements.

The expectation of the New Age Movement is that humanity, individually and collectively, is on the verge of a radical transformation of consciousness and enlightenment (the Age of Aquarius) which will qualitatively improve the way we live with and relate to each other and the rest of reality. Many are drawn to the movement following a dramatic experience of personal transformation, others through a friend, an advertisement, or by otherwise happening across the movement which leads them to pursue their resulting vision in every aspect of life.

The predominant New Age view of reality is monistic, or pantheistic. Some allow for the existence of a spiritual or otherwise unseen dimension, often believed to be inhabited by superior, disembodied entities. Many New Agers prefer to speak of forces or energies at work in the world, rather than of a personal God in the Christian sense. There is a wide spectrum of belief in the ability, and desirability, of human efforts to control and manipulate these forces and energies, and some debate whether they exist beyond or deep within human nature.

The philosophy of the New Age Movement is basically holistic, stressing the intimate connectedness of all that is and the effect which actions in one area can have on other aspects of our lives, communities or planet. Some New Agers, often drawing upon Jungian terminology, continue to describe the world in dualistic terms, commonly denoted as a masculine/feminine divide, and celebrate the New Age as the age of the 'feminine' with its traditional stereotypical concomitants: emotion, sensitivity, insight, perception (as opposed to rationalism); the body (as opposed to mind); care (as opposed to justice) and the immanent Spirit often symbolised as the Earth-Mother (as opposed to the transcendent Father-God). All stress, at least in theory, the need for balance, wholeness and harmony and see the emphasis on the 'feminine' as a necessary antidote to the passing Age where 'masculine' values, resulting in alienation and domination, ruled.

Some think the New Age will arrive suddenly and apocalyptically, and have millenarian visions not unlike some Christians. Others see it as having already begun, but yet to come about in its fullness through human efforts and the natural processes of evolution and/or rebirth. Reincarnation is a widely held and often unexamined assumption.

Meditation is a widespread practice even in the more secular wings of the New Age Movement, where it is considered beneficial to one's overall health, well-being and success (especially in business or personal relationships) to spend some time each day in this way. There is a general rediscovery of the importance of ritual as a means of focusing on meanings and values within a community context. Rituals have been developed to mark passages of life, the cycles of the year or the significance of other events. There is much use of sound - chanting, singing, mantras, music, dolphins, drumming, bells; of visuals - pictures, mandalas, sculpture; of smells - incense, perfumed oils, flowers; of movement - circle dancing, gestures; as well as of natural elements - fire and water.

Some Problems and Dangers

While there are aspects of the New Age Movement that Catholics can and do learn from, often reminding them of the forgotten riches of their own tradition, there is much to beware of. Ideas and practices taken from Eastern religions, only partially understood and detached from the social and cultural systems which support and modify them, can be destructive. An example, deriving from the concept of karma, and encouraged by belief in the limitless power of mind to control matter, is the dogma that individuals are totally responsible for creating their own reality.

In certain circumstances this amounts to blaming victims for evils or misfortunes that befall them. Some go so far as to hold that the Jews brought the Holocaust upon themselves, that Black people are responsible for racism, that those living in poverty or subjected to some other form of violence must want or deserve it. This is a form of predestinationism, and New Age fascism and fundamentalism are not unknown. A similar problem arises regarding physical and mental health or illness. Miraculous claims are made for the ability of the will to control illness and disease, or of other powers available to those who submit to

particular beliefs or devotional practices. Wittingly or not, many sufferers have been led to blame themselves for their continuing illness and develop feelings of guilt and despair.

An almost opposite New Age approach to sin and evil is to regard it simply as a form of ignorance, an inevitable (even necessary) result of the evolutionary process of the individual or the Cosmos, which will be overcome when the higher consciousness is achieved. Any notion of personal culpability or responsibility is absent and repentance is replaced by 'transformation'.

For some New Agers the revaluing of experience and emotion has led to the rejection of reason altogether, or at least to the acceptance of a system which, while it may have an internal logic, is based on dubious or bizarre premises. This is often coupled within more psycho-therapeutic circles with a thoroughgoing individualism which suggests that the well being, concerns and attitudes of the individual client are all that matter. While this may give individuals feelings of greater worth and self-importance, make them more immediately successful in pursuing their own personal, political or business desires and ambitions, it hardly encourages empathy, altruism or communitarian values.

Another excess is associated with the rediscovery of the symbolic nature of language, actions and things: nothing is what it appears to be. Apart from the conspiracy theories to which this gives rise, the rejection of reason, combined with beliefs in hidden sources of saving knowledge or healing energy, has led to abuses of authority in many instances. As there is no central regulatory body it is easy and lucrative for charlatans to play on the ignorance or vulnerability of their followers for material gain or personal power. The accepting and non-judgemental approach of many New Agers has often meant that anything can pass as conducive to promoting the New Age. However, within many areas of the movement, certain ideas, teachers, practices and practitioners have come to be more respected than others. Also, the vast number of competing systems and the free and frequent movement of 'seekers' between many of these, results in an on-going scrutiny and debate about the relative value of differing New Age ideas, practices and leaders.

An area overlapping with the New Age Movement is the area of 'regression therapy'. This is psychotherapy based upon the premise that current unhappiness, depression, or general dissatisfaction with life is caused by some trauma in a past life or in some other event that has become blocked out of the memory. The process involves 'recovering' the lost memory through visualisation and other techniques, and somehow coming to terms with it in such a way that total happiness or well being is gained. While this may provide some relief in the sense that one now has an explanation for suffering where before one had none, the long term value of some of these explanations is doubtful.

There is increasing evidence, based on the understanding that memory itself is a construction and not a 'replay of events', that in many cases the so-called 'recovered memories' are in fact imaginative constructions based upon the suggestions of the well meaning but inadequately trained 'therapist'. This is borne

out by the fact that clients of therapists who believe in reincarnation 'remember' their past lives, but never having been abducted by aliens. Likewise the clients of therapists who believe in inter-galactic travellers 'remember' being abducted by aliens but do not remember past lives. There is a more frightening equivalent outside the New Age Movement: it is almost without exception the clients of those therapists who have a firm belief in the active and destructive power of Satan who 'remember' being involved in so-called 'Satanic Abuse' rituals.

Roman Catholic approaches to the New Age

While there is a lot to beware of in the New Age Movement, and much that is at odds both with Catholic teaching and common sense, Catholics need to learn about it and can learn something from it. Since Vatican II the Church has taught that those judged to be of good will can also be saved. Guidelines for dialogue with other religions have been developed since the Council, and Catholics should follow these when approaching the New Age Movement, especially the suggestion that ideals should be compared with ideals, and practice with practice. Many of the more extreme condemnations of the New Age do not follow this procedure, but compare highest Catholic ideals with worst excesses of New Age practice.

Catholics should not accept unthinkingly some of the more alarmist Christian condemnations of the New Age Movement. Indeed, many accusations made by fundamentalist Protestants against the New Age are similar to the criticisms they make of Catholicism itself, especially accusations of employing alternative sources of revelation, of superstition and of magical practices.

Catholicism makes far wider use of the senses in worship than do more Protestant Christian traditions. Medals, statues, beads, candles, pictures, incense, music, chanting are regarded as useful aids to prayer and worship, and a traditional Catholic would be at home with many forms of New Age ritual. Likewise miracles, angels and visions are part of the rich and varied tradition. Catholics pray for the dead, believe in their intercession, in divine intervention and have a developed mystical tradition expressing the unity of all that is. Catholics believe in a combination of faith, grace and works as a means to salvation, and adopt a more optimistic approach to the fundamental goodness of human nature. In so far as its teaching is based on the Natural Law, it is easier for Catholicism to accommodate certain New Age ideas. The work of those engaged in Creation Spirituality is an attempt to do precisely this.

Some of the recent tragedies involving new religious movements have been exacerbated by ill informed antagonism and polarisation. It is incumbent upon Catholics to engage in critical and informed dialogue with those in the New Age Movement, to see beliefs and practices in their context and not condemn the whole movement for unacceptable ideas and practices at work in only a small part of it. The New Age Movement is a dynamic not a static phenomenon. Informed comment by Catholics can ensure that it develops in a way more conducive to the flourishing and fulfilment of its members and thus, in Catholic perspective, to the greater glory of God.

GETTING TO GRIPS

Timothy Pike

The first year at seminary is always a time of new insights and experiences, even more so when it includes getting to grips with a new language and studies in philosophy in that language. It can be harrowing, but it is also enriching and enjoyable, as Tim Pike, first year student, shows us in extracts from his journal written during the year.

September

I cannot describe the level to which I miss England. Now I can appreciate how easy life was for me there. Never would I have thought it possible that I would miss the green fields, hedgerows, gently rounded hills, broad leaved trees, slate roofs, terraces of houses, Boots, Marks & Spencers, W. H. Smiths, telephoning friends and the freedom that comes with having a car. In short, it's missing the familiar things and it's taking a lot of adjusting to. Having said that, the first few weeks in Lancaster, this time three years ago, were much tougher. At Lancaster, I was feeling lonely despite being among six thousand other students. Here there are just eleven of us, and I am in good company.

For the first ten days after arriving here, I was out at Country House along with Chris, one of the other new students. The time was taken up with swimming, tennis, siestas, trips, eating and reading - not much more than a holiday. The area around Country House is very arid, except for the odd irrigated field or garden. The only trees are of the same type of pine which are widely scattered in sandy earth. The land is very flat except for the 'table'-shaped rocky hills on the horizon.

Just as I was getting used to the holiday feeling I was sent to live with a Spanish family in the town. The idea is to absorb the Spanish culture and practise



Tim with Pilar, our resident Spanish teacher.

the language, while attending the Spanish classes in College during the day. Unlike in England, people actually live in the City Centre and living space is very restricted here. Everyone lives in flats up to ten storeys high. On the ground floor there are supermarkets, banks, car showrooms, cinemas and thousands of small privately-owned shops.

The family are now great friends, especially after I detected more than a loose grasp of English among them. With me they talk clearly, in short sentences and with great patience, except Isaías, the father. He speaks very fast, very loudly, with lots of arm waving and bursts of laughter. I could only stare back perplexed. I confided to Paquita, his wife, my problems in trying to understand him. She reassured me that after forty years of marriage she too could not understand her husband.

October

If anything, my grasp of Spanish has slackened since leaving the family and finishing the language course. We all had glowing reports from the course assuring us of our ability to handle philosophy/theology in Spanish to the required level. But faced with shop assistants, philosophy profs and students and the College kitchen staff I doubt whether the report was right or not. Apparently by December things will start to fall into place. Four hours of monologue lectures every morning is a nightmare. I think that the best practice I have is on visits to the Spanish family.

A couple of coincidences are worth mentioning. A priest who I used to serve Mass for in the mid-1970's and had not seen since, Fr. John Bolland, turned up this



Four hours of lectures every morning ... the Augs.

week. He is the priest who heard my first Confession, gave me my First Communion and organised my Confirmation. With him was the present Parish priest of the same parish (Marnhull and Gillingham), Fr. Michael Cole. He knows many of the members of my family, from my Gran to niece and nephews. They were returning from a golfing holiday in Portugal. Meeting them here made me feel a little closer to home, and to my past.

A bigger coincidence happened to fellow First Year Chris Parsons. After losing touch for 16 years, his Godfather, a good friend of his father, arrived at Country House. Chris was wearing the same St. Christopher medal that the man had given him all those years before. They only recognised each other by their names. The significance of this chance meeting is made greater by the fact that Chris's father died 17 years ago.

November

Since I last wrote there have been two notable occurrences. Firstly, at the end of last month we returned to Country House for the annual retreat. It was excellent. For five days I could forget about studies and Spanish and focus once more on my reasons for being here. We were free in the afternoons to wander about, and luckily the weather was warm. It was a good chance to see the other students outside of the context of just meals and Chapel. The priest who led the retreat, Fr. Pat Kilgariff, concentrated mainly on themes relevant to priesthood, but there was a lot that would be appropriate for anyone trying to lead a Christian life.

The second event was the Vocations Directors' Conference, attended by 38 priests from Britain. It was fascinating to observe a group of priests in each other's company. It was as if a group of fifth form boys were on holiday without their teacher. At different times some got locked out for staying out too late, others were constantly in giggly huddles, others had extended lie-ins and missed the presentations. Actually, thinking about it, it was the Scottish priests who got up to all of this.

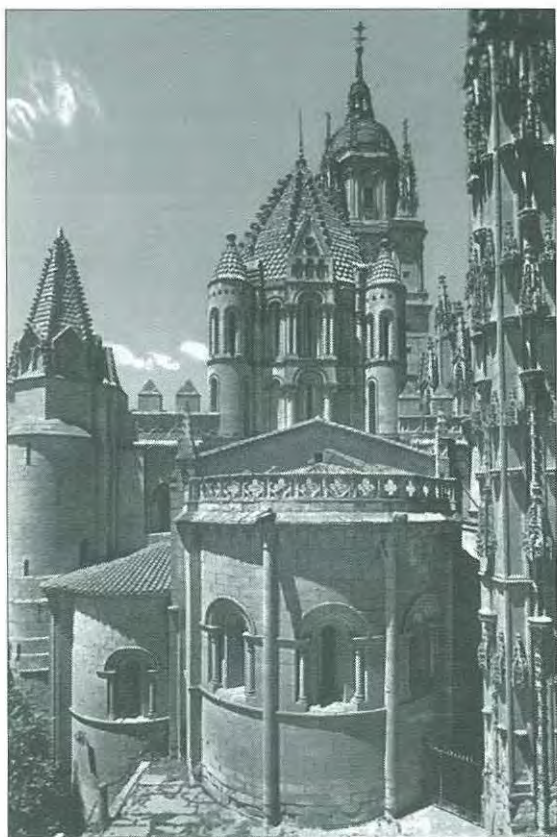
The climax of the week was a meal at a local restaurant, the *Centro Segoviano*, for all the participants, the staff and students. At the end of the meal there was a spontaneous cabaret which began with impressions of some of the English bishops, regional songs, and stand-up jokes each one getting slightly more risqué, all of them revolving around booze, women, confessions and priests. The evening ended with the Scots leading six rounds of 'Auld Lang Syne'. They were very emotional and even had tears in their eyes. The week provided an opportunity to get to know my Vocations Director, Fr. Jonathan Shaddock, as well as catch up on news from the Diocese. Also present was Fr. Joe O'Connor, the chaplain at Lancaster University, so I was also able to catch up on what was happening in Lancaster and reminisce a little.

I am finding new ways of spending my spare time. Musical talents have never abounded in my family and certainly not with me. However I am attempting to teach myself the guitar and last Sunday I had to take my turn at

Mass as Cantor, which meant singing solo. It was daunting stuff and never something I would have the nerve to do at home. Regardless I surprised the others (and myself), by having quite a strong voice not too far out of tune. To keep fit, we have started a badminton ladder, playing in the College sports block. Once the squash court floor is renewed I hope to take that up too. Once a week I swim a mile at a nearby pool.

I hope after nearly three months, I am coming across as more adjusted than before to the Spanish way of doing things, but I have some way to go. I no longer miss the English shops, architecture, hedges and fitted carpets, etc.

December



The Old Cathedral at Salamanca.

I've started to venture out a bit. In the last two weeks I've been to Salamanca, Madrid and Burgos. Mum and Dad were out for a week, so one day Darren, who is in his final year, drove us in the College car to Salamanca. It is Spain's equivalent of Oxford. The city centres on the Plaza Mayor, one of the most magnificent in Spain. It is surrounded by arcaded three-storey buildings all in the same 18th Century style and honey-coloured stone. Down the Rua Mayor are the Pontifical University, the two Cathedrals, which are joined to each other, then the Civil University and finally the Roman Bridge.

The beauty of Salamanca is quite a contrast with Valladolid which is a modern, industrial, traffic-filled city. Despite its important history as one-time capital of Spain and birthplace of Philip II, not many of its historic buildings remain, except, that is,

for the churches. What makes Valladolid for me is its atmosphere, especially at night. It is customary for everyone to go out for a walk at night. It's so different to see people of all ages, entire families, out on the streets at the same time.

After dropping Mum and Dad off at the airport, John Morgan and I drove into Madrid and headed for good old Marks & Spencers and bought some real English sandwiches and loads of other goodies. We walked around the Plaza de

España and down the Gran Vía. This is the equivalent of Leicester Square or Haymarket with many large cinemas, hotels, smart shops and restaurants. It could be in any western country, except, of course, for the language. We found a cinema showing films in the original versions, that is with the soundtrack in the original language, and afterwards, shamefully, headed for Burger King. For three or four hours it was like being back in England.

Last week there were two Bank Holidays. In Spain these are always on fixed dates rather than Mondays, and when a holiday falls on a Tuesday or a Thursday the Monday or Friday is usually given as a free day as well so as to make a long weekend. The two days off last week fell on Tuesday (Constitution Day) and Thursday (Immaculate Conception), and it was hoped that we would be given both the Monday and the Friday to make two long weekends, and the Wednesday as well to join the two weekends together. So rather than the usual *punte* (bridge) we would have had an *acueducto*. Unfortunately we were only given the Friday off. Nevertheless, Bob King (2nd year) and I caught the train up to Burgos to stay for a couple of nights. We quickly found a cheap hotel in the centre of the city. It's another medieval town centred around its Gothic Cathedral and nearby, more modern, Plaza Mayor, each connected by narrow winding streets.

These experiences of travelling about and starting to go to the cinema, have given me a burst of confidence when it comes to speaking Spanish.

February

Exams have been my preoccupation since returning from the Christmas break. I was half expecting to feel disappointed at returning, having seen and heard from so many people in that short time. However it was easy, perhaps because I was so used to the routine out here and had recognised over Christmas how much Spanish I did actually know.

After the exams were over, we were given four days off. Darren and I borrowed the College van and drove eastward. First we visited the mountains between here and Madrid, the Sierra de Guadarrama. There we walked in the pine forests for three or four miles, past deserted ski runs and chair lifts (the weather had been too mild for the snow to settle). The views from the clearings over to other nearby tree clad mountains were spectacular.

Next we travelled to some villages which Lauren, one of the kitchen staff in College, had recommended. Pedraza is a preserved sixteenth-century village on a hill top, a little off the beaten track, at the foot of the mountains. Except for the castle, all the buildings are in the same honey-coloured stone and huge timber frames with over-hanging upper floors. In the main square these overhang by a room's width, held up by pillars of stone or old timber creating a colonnaded walkway, a couple of steps above the level of the square. The perfection of this *pueblo* is completed by a winding approach road with tremendous views of the village from a couple of miles away. It meant, however, that it was quite an expensive place to stay, the only two hotels charging about £55 a night for a twin room.

After a good walk around Pedraza we made our way to Riaza, a larger *pueblo* nearer the mountains and a bit more modern. Immediately we found a cheap place to stay overlooking the Plaza Mayor, which is circular. Paying only £10 for the room we could afford to spend more on food and solve the world's problems over a bottle of local wine.

The next day we drove up the nearby mountainside to a ski resort, again abandoned, called Pinilla, notable for incredible views over the surrounding countryside. It is far greener in these parts than the area around Valladolid, though the soil is poor and it resembles heathland. The final hours of our break were spent in the village of Sepúlveda, a favourite stopping place for students of the College. This *pueblo* clings precariously to the rocky side of a steep valley, pinnaced by the Parish church. After a glass of wine and a few *pinchos* we walked down to the River Casilla which meanders for miles between two steep red sandstone cliffs. Overhead flew some twenty griffon vultures with wingspans of five or six feet, who had made their home in the side of the cliff. We stayed there about three hours before returning to the van, and College.

March

I returned to Madrid three weeks ago. The Rector had to go and pick up a Czech student who was coming to stay and offered a lift to anyone who wanted a day out. Once there I went off on my own to visit the gallery which houses the Thyssen collection. This is a private collection of hundreds of works on temporary loan covering the whole history of art. Although there is a tube, it is fairly easy to walk around the City Centre. After visiting the newly consecrated Cathedral of the Almudena, I stumbled across a carnival quite unexpectedly. Like so many cities across the world, the days before Lent are Carnival season. Many of the crowd were in costumes, watching the procession wend its way through the old part of the city, up the Calle Mayor towards the Plaza Mayor. Men and women wore huge, flamboyant, colourful outfits whilst dancing along the street with pop or traditional music blaring out behind them. One distinctive group were dressed as doves of peace with white satin costumes, large wobbly net wings and masks. They were followed by a float with a gigantic mechanical dove. A couple of blokes clearly had had enough and trudged along beside the ones who were still dancing, fags hanging from their beaks.

The following Saturday a group of us visited Segovia. About an hour and a half away by car, this is a small ancient city nestling in the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama. It has a first-century Roman aqueduct built of large granite blocks without any mortar. In parts it is 96 feet above the uneven ground and has, apparently, 118 arches on two levels. It is still used to bring water across the valley to the city. There is a late Gothic Cathedral in Cotswold coloured stone which totally dominates the sky line, along with a few snowcapped mountains. The nearby eleventh- and thirteenth-century Alcázar is built on a steep-sided crag at the edge of the city, above the undulating plain below. The city is famed for its local delicacy, roast suckling pig, as well as for the tomb of St. John of the Cross, entombed in the Carmelite convent situated below the steep cliffs of the city. Two



The Alcázar at Segovia.

separate groups of gypsies approached us trying hard to sell us lace table cloths. Persistently they would try to get people to feel the quality of the merchandise whilst stepping back holding the opposite edge of the cloth, thus displaying the whole cloth. It is difficult just to walk away or deny interest without embarrassment. Because of our lack of interest we were cursed to have a bad journey, so, back in the van, we succumbed to superstition, and said a Hail Mary before setting off again.

There are two Czech students staying with us here at the moment. Actually one of them is half Hungarian, half Slovak. He is a language student who already speaks English well, and has come to learn Spanish. The other is a seminarian from Moravia who has come here to learn English as part of a year out from seminary. They have brought a fresh dimension to the College with their enthusiasm to be here, and their stories of oppression under the old regime. They help me to feel less of a new boy, and it is funny to be on the other end of mispronunciations and misunderstandings of language.

April

Valladolid makes Holy Week a public, dramatic and solemn occasion. For four centuries or more the people have paraded the many life-like statues (*pasos*) depicting the events of the Passion of Christ. Many of the *pasos* belong to confraternities and others to parishes, who care for, carry and process with their statues during the week. They wear old fashioned costumes which include tall



Hundreds of Confraternity members take part in the Good Friday General Procession.

pointed conical hoods which cover the face, with only two holes left for the eyes. Many walk bare footed as an additional penance.

On Palm Sunday there was a procession from the Cathedral through the old colonnaded streets around the Church of the Santa Vera Cruz. The confraternities, including hundreds of children, all carried huge palm branches, as did many in the crowd. After half an hour of palms, the *paso* of Jesus riding on a donkey,



The rustling of palms being waved at the Palm Sunday Procession.



Christ at the Pillar.

wearing a red cloak, came into sight. As it approached the noise of the crowd was drowned out by the dirge of the cornets, drums and the rustling of palms being waved. The Archbishop, who had followed the *paso* through the streets, ascended to the balcony of the Vera Cruz church at the end of the Procession to speak a few words and bless the crowd of thousands.

On the Tuesday night two processions started simultaneously from opposite ends of the town centre. They both made their way towards the College of the Santa Cruz, and converged in the square in front of the baroque façade. Again with the accompaniment of cornet dirges and deafening drum beats, the *paso* of Jesus carrying a wooden cross met that of his mother Mary, to weak to stand, with arms outstretched. Both *pasos* graphically demonstrated the expressions of pain of Jesus and Mary.

The largest procession is on Good Friday in the evening. All the *pasos* and all the nineteen confraternities participate in this three hour long procession. The procession converges on the Plaza Mayor where there was a huge crowd who had paid for seats. This, along with all the other processions, brought to life the moods of the crowds in Jerusalem witnessing the passion and death of Christ almost two thousand years ago.

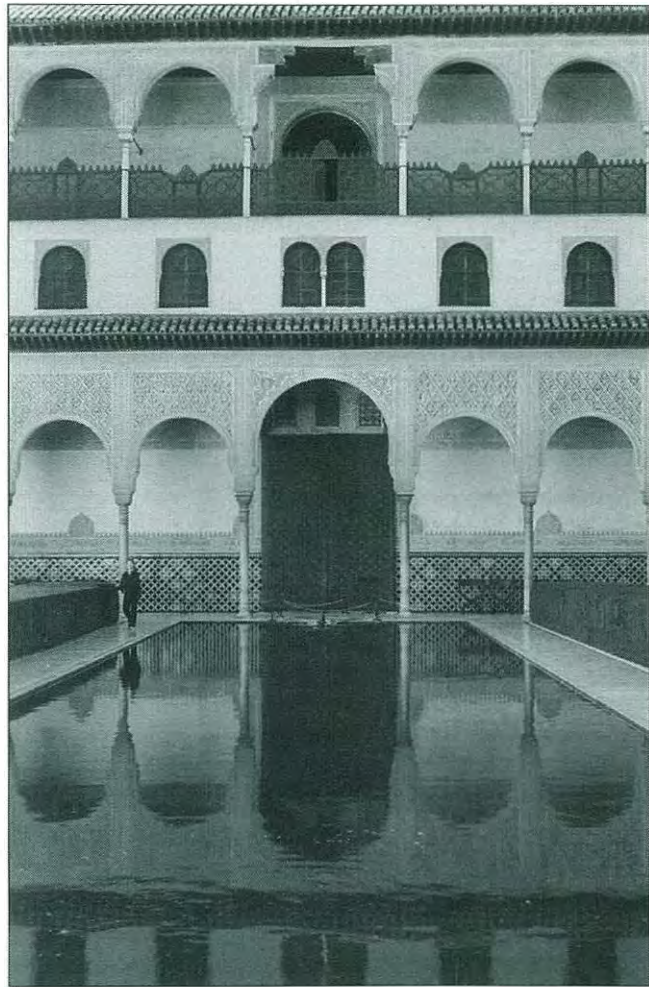
On Easter Sunday after the morning Mass we are free until the following Sunday evening. I met up with four good friends I knew in Lancaster and drove in a hire car to Andalucía. After seven hours we arrived in our village at 2 am. The owners of the cottage had made arrangements for the owners of the local bar to give us the key, so we had to wake them up, conscious that we were at least two hours late. However they would not open the door to us, and shouted something that sounded fairly negative from the other side of the door. After having lost our



Travelling companions: Anj, Joe, Rachel and Sian.

way twice en route this just added to our feelings of tiredness and despair. Fortunately we had the address of an English couple in case of emergency, and so, surrounded by three loose barking dogs running around us, we stumbled our way in the darkness to their front door. Luckily they found a spare key for us. The cottage was tiny with one bed short, one made from wooden pallets roughly nailed together and had no hot water, let alone a shower or a bath. At the end of the four days there my initial disappointment was replaced by a sense of adventure and affection for the place. We found a hammock which we used as an extra bed and, with an arrangement of kettles and saucepans, heated enough hot water for everyone.

The small whitewashed village was situated in the middle of the Sierra Nevada, Spain's highest mountain range, an hour away from any remotely straight or level road. It was perched on the side of a mountain with narrow steep paths of rough concrete which made do as streets. There was a lemon and orange grove with superb views of the surrounding mountains. The highlight of the week, apart from the evenings spent drinking the village plonk, was a day spent in Granada at the Alhambra Hill. This is a complex of palaces built at different times under the various Moorish rulers before the end of the fifteenth century. The Alhambra Palace is really breathtaking and quite unlike anything I have ever seen before. It has many courtyards with shallow ponds, running water and splashing fountains. It is a very shady, cool and tranquil place with beautiful Moorish architecture, in an imposing setting, on a hill overlooking the city with snow-capped mountains forming a backdrop.



The Alhambra Palace, Granada.

Before returning to Valladolid we spent a night in Toledo, a medieval walled city built on a hill over the River Tajo. It would be possible to wander for ages getting lost in the cobbled streets around this enchanting city. Most impressive were the preserved synagogues and mosques, built before 1492 when the Jews and Moslems were expelled. They were preserved by becoming churches, but are now, for the most part, museums.

May

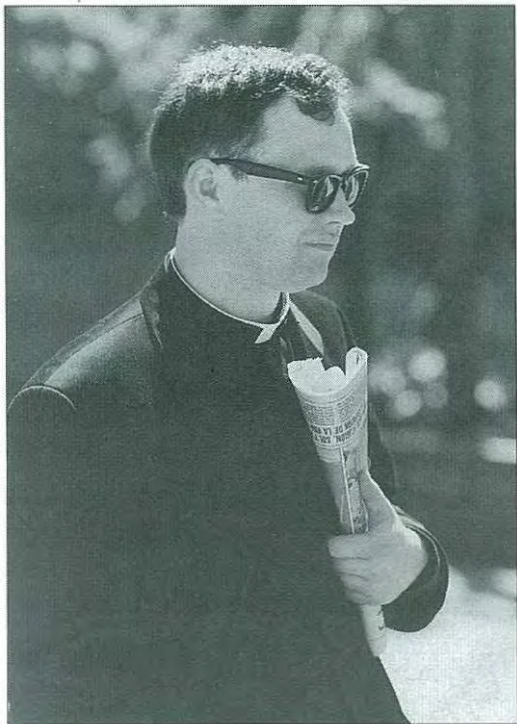
Exams start in a couple of weeks and in five weeks I set sail for England. It feels like it's still a long way off as there is so much work to be done before then. Until it's all completed I won't be able to look forward to going home. This month there is little to report in the way of travel. I did stay overnight in Madrid recently. María Jesús, one of the daughters from the Spanish family with whom I stayed last summer, and I went to visit her sister Sagrario. I really enjoyed it. We met several



Shallow ponds, running water and splashing fountains.

other people, visited a modern art gallery (María Jesús is a brilliant artist), and had a look at the Atocha station, a traditional turn-of-the-century railway station which has been turned into an indoor tropical jungle which serves as a waiting area for the adjoining station.

I think I have adapted to living here and on the whole I like it very much. It's not perfect, but, then again, I do not expect it to be. One thing I have enjoyed is writing this journal. It started as a time saving scheme for writing letters, but it has been useful too for focusing and reflecting on my new life. So, I thank God for being here. It has been a year of pains as well as exciting new insights into another part of the world. This summer I am especially looking forward to some practical pastoral work in England and Ecuador, as well as a break from philosophy.



*Cool character ... Chris O'Connor
blends in with the surroundings.*



Ramón and Darren



St. Teresa of Ávila: Bronze sculpture outside the Convent of the Incarnation.

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